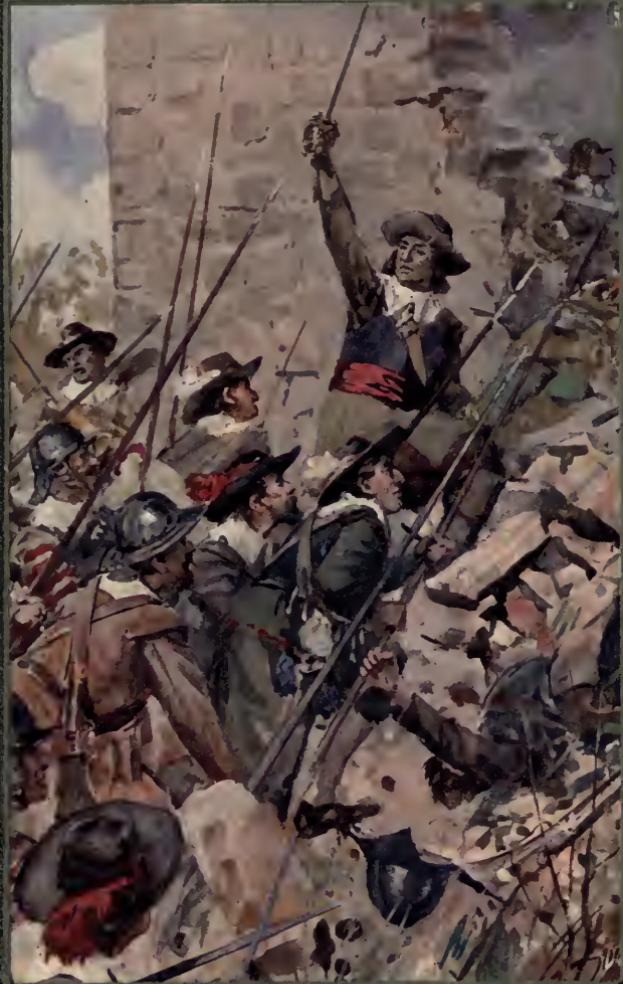


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# PEEPS AT HISTORY



# IRELAND

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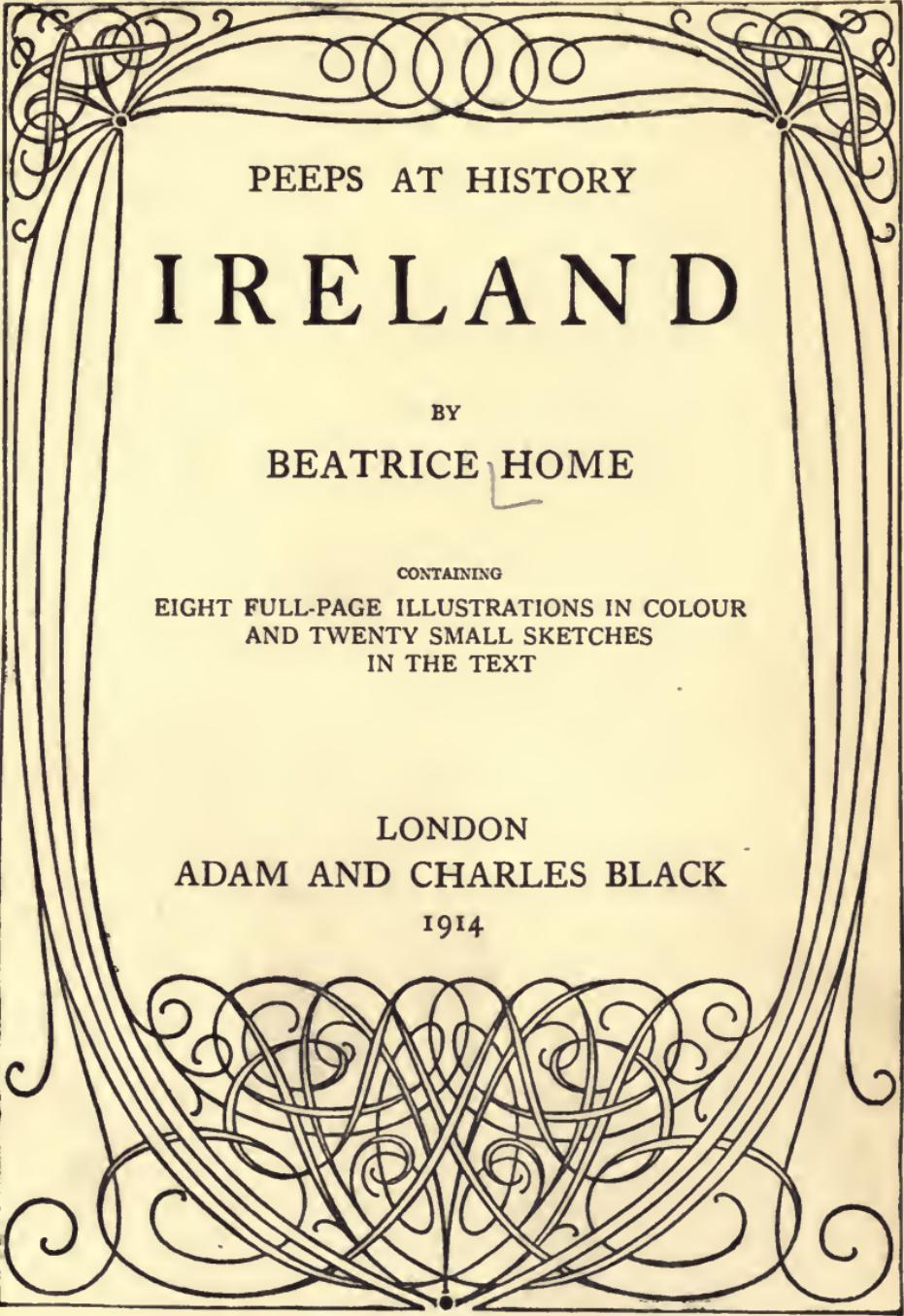




SHANE O'NEILL AND HIS CLANSMEN INTERVIEWING QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Page 3

Allan Stewart.



PEEPS AT HISTORY  
**IRELAND**  
BY  
BEATRICE HOME

CONTAINING  
EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR  
AND TWENTY SMALL SKETCHES  
IN THE TEXT

LONDON  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK  
1914



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*Also twenty black-and-white illustrations in the text.*

# IRELAND

## CHAPTER I

### BEFORE THE CONQUEST

HOWEVER contrary their point of view may be, all historians are agreed upon one thing, that the history of Ireland is one of the saddest on record, and that its unfolding story tells of a persistent and dogged ill-luck. At no period during the past centuries can the blame for the unsuccessful government of Ireland be laid entirely upon the English conquerors or upon the Irish people. A combination of circumstances, differences of race and religion, the Celtic temperament, climatic conditions, the partial conquest of Henry II., necessitating the constant, irritating renewal of English force—all have united to produce the almost continual civil war, suppressed or breaking out into open warfare, that has prevailed in the beautiful but unhappy island. There have been so few moments of real national triumph, that its history has been left for the invading conquerors to write, who naturally have exaggerated



The Proleek Stone—a Remarkable Cromlech in Co. Louth.

## Ireland

the outbreaks of disorder and tumult, describing as traitors those who in happier lands would be called patriots, and enlarging upon the almost insuperable difficulties of dealing with an unruly and ungrateful people. But the historians of the present age are, happily, more just and impartial, saying with Mr. Bagwell, who has made an exhaustive study of Ireland under the Tudors and the Stuarts, that “the history of Ireland is at best a sad one ; but its study, if it be really studied for the truth’s sake, can hardly fail to make men more tolerant.”

The Irish people are descendants of the same Celtic race that once occupied Gaul and Britain, and possess all the characteristics by which that imaginative and poetic race is distinguished. They are brilliant, witty, and affectionate, devotedly attached to their country and their leaders, but they lack much of the practical common-sense and submission to law and order of the English. Beneath their bright humour lies a deep-seated melancholy, due doubtless to their misty climate and the grey, stormy ocean that surrounds them, and at one time kept them isolated from the civilized world. Even to-day the peasant-folk are full of quaint poetic and superstitious beliefs, of fairies and gnomes who dwell among the mountains and streams of their romantic land, and who seem as real and vital to them as their present-day neighbours. The dreamy charm of Ireland’s scenery has penetrated deep into the Irish nature, so that all the ballads are full of the beauty of the mountains, the lakes, the rocky bays, and the green valleys.

Perhaps one of Ireland’s earliest misfortunes lay in the fact that the Romans never landed on her shores,

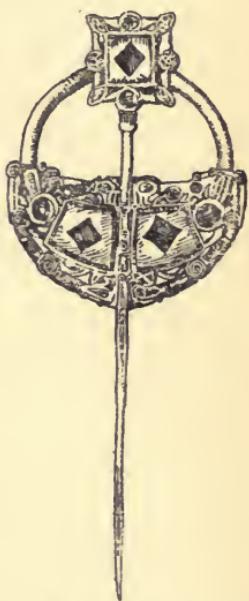


TARA AT SUNSET.  
The Statue of St. Patrick on left, and the Lia Fall, or Stone of Destiny, on the right.  
Page 3.



## Before the Conquest

but only looked at her across the channel, and so deprived her of Britain's initiation into the arts of peace and civilization and the value of centralized government. The rough tempestuous sea washing her coasts kept Ireland free from invaders for many centuries, and, unfortunately, when they did come, they spread ruin instead of good government throughout the country. Thus, while Britain was learning—painfully, no doubt, at first—to build roads and bridges and houses, under Roman instruction, Ireland remained in a backward state, isolated even in her own land by the high mountains, the dense forests, and the vast peat-bogs that occupied the centre of the island. The only connection with the Continent lay through the Phœnician and Spanish merchants, whose vessels had long made an acquaintance with Ireland. The country was divided among tribes whose chiefs owned almost absolute power in their own domain, but at the same time acknowledged a king, who was the overlord of Ireland. This royal power lay for some centuries in the hands of the Hy-Nialls, the ancestors of the O'Neills of Ulster, but their authority was merely nominal, as they had neither council nor army to enforce their dictates. But, if their jurisdiction was limited, they enjoyed the gratification of a ceremonial coronation, a courtly following of nobles and bards, and regal assemblies on the hill of Tara, situated about twenty miles north-west of Dublin. Under the king came the



A Richly Ornamented  
Brooch from Ardagh,  
Co. Limerick.

## Ireland

chieftains, who kept up petty courts and maintained power over their lesser chiefs. The kings were elected on a popular basis, and their successor chosen during their lifetime, to avoid any confusion at a royal death. The successor, or Tanist, as he was known, was always selected from the royal family.

Tribal conditions dominated the life of the people, the nature of the country tending to separate them into clans and families, and so producing the inevitable feuds and strife of such a system. Every member of the tribe bore the same name, and was said to be connected with the chief, to whom they were devoted, following him to death in all his incessant conflicts with the neighbouring tribes. The lowest classes were represented by the slaves and the semi-free tenants, the latter being little removed from slavery, being completely under the power of the chiefs, who forced them to do all the work on the land. They were usually captives taken in war, or any outcasts from the tribes.

In primitive days all land was held in common, each clansman having a share in the possessions of the tribe, the chief merely being the father of the community. But by degrees separate ownership began to be established as life became more settled, for, though the family idea lingered long and was not entirely extinguished for many centuries, the patriarchal principle of common property was not long maintained in its most severe form. A man's wealth lay, as with the patriarchs of old, in the number of his cattle, his horses, sheep and pigs, and the general produce of his land.

As there was no general council of the nation, corresponding to the Saxon Witan, the laws conse-

## Before the Conquest

quently were not the result of the deliberations of the people, but were compiled by an hereditary class of lawyers, known as Brehons. Elected in a similar manner to the chieftains, the Brehons acted both as law-makers and judges, and were a highly esteemed body of men. The laws they produced were extremely complicated in comparison with English laws, probably due to being the work of specialized men, rather than the general common-sense of a community meeting the needs of the moment. But, in spite of some unnecessary confusion, there was considerable justice in the Brehon law, though it has been much abused by the English lawyers of the Elizabethan age, who considered it beneath contempt. Certainly, to English eyes the punishment for murder was almost grotesque, being merely a money compensation. Unfortunately, there was no national system for enforcing the law, beyond the power of individual chieftains who maintained the law over their own people.

The early pagan religion of the Irish was some form of nature-worship, resembling that of the Druids. Christianity reached Ireland about the fourth century, and made some progress among the people ; but it was not until the coming of St. Patrick that anything like a general conversion took place.

So many legends have surrounded St. Patrick that many people have almost begun to doubt the reality of his existence, but all the best historians of to-day give him a prominent place in the history of Ireland during the early Christian centuries. Indeed, Professor Bury claims for St. Patrick that "he must be placed along with the most efficient of those who took part in spreading the Christian faith beyond the bound-

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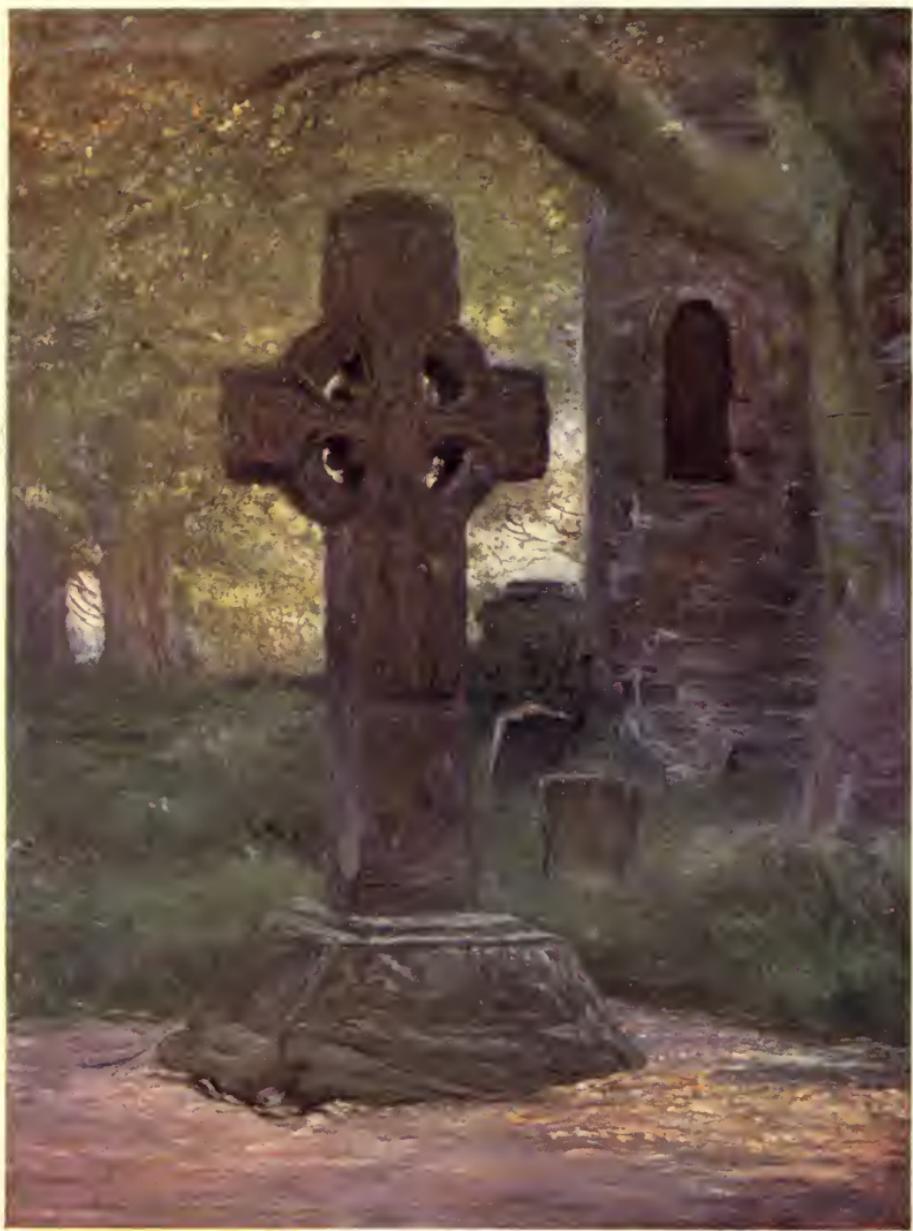
aries of the Roman Empire." Many places have been assigned as the probable birthplace of St. Patrick, but Professor Bury, who has made a particular study of the life of Ireland's patron saint, thinks that his home was somewhere in the west of Britain, and suggests that it was possibly near the Severn. His father was a Briton

named Calpurnius, a small land-owner who bore a Roman name, being a free Roman subject. About A.D. 405, when St. Patrick was about sixteen years old, some Irish pirates came to the coast of Britain, and carried him off along with other captives and booty. So far away did Ireland seem that St. Patrick writes of his being taken "to the ultimate places of the earth," his destination being probably Connaught, and not Antrim, as it has been usually recorded. For six years he acted as swineherd for the master to whom he had been sold, these years also bringing



The Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell  
in Dublin Museum.

him to a real faith in the God of whom he had learnt in his far-away home. So keen was his fervour that he used to get up before the sun rose, and, whatever the weather might be, go out into the rain or the snow to offer up his prayers to God. One day he heard a voice saying, "Behold, thy ship is ready," which he understood to mean that it was now possible for him to escape. Relying upon spiritual help, he managed to slip away from his master, penetrate the dense forests,



SAINT COLUMBKILLE'S CROSS, KELLS.  
With Inscriptions in Ancient Irish Character.

F. S. Walker.



## Before the Conquest

and finally to reach a port on the east coast, where he joined a vessel just ready to sail. After some persuasions the captain permitted St. Patrick to come on board, on condition that he worked his way to the next seaport, and without further adventure he eventually reached the coast of Gaul and safety.

St. Patrick could not forget the pagan darkness of Ireland, and so about A.D. 430 he returned to the land of his slavery, endowed with power by the Pope to convert the Irish. The story of his progress sounds miraculous, for the whole country seems to have fallen under the spell of his intense enthusiasm and to have accepted the Christianity which he offered. Doubtless the knowledge of the Irish character which he had obtained as a slave, helped him in his mission, for realizing the devotion to the chief, he invariably appealed first to the head of the tribe, and in winning him, won the whole clan. As has been mentioned before, St. Patrick did not introduce Christianity, but, as Professor Bury says, "he secured its permanence, shaped its course, and made it a power in the land." By bringing it into contact with Rome, and teaching Latin to the clergy, he made all the culture of the Empire possible for Ireland, and in this way founded those schools of learning for which the island afterwards became famous. St. Patrick is entirely worthy of the reverence with which he is still regarded by the Irish people, for he "made Christianity a living force in Ireland which could never be extinguished." So great was the zeal with which St. Patrick had inspired the Irish clergy, that not only were churches and monasteries built in their own land, but they spread themselves abroad, carrying the light of Christianity

## Ireland

to the wilds of Germany and the Alps. St. Columba crossed over to Iona and converted the Picts, while other fervent missionaries were to be found as far south as Northern Italy. During the dark centuries

when the Empire was being overthrown by the heathen barbarians, the Irish Church remained untouched, attracting to its schools students from all over Western Europe; indeed, at one time it seemed, as one writer puts it, that "Celtic, and not Latin, Christianity was to mould the destinies of the Church of the West."

While Rome was occupied in preserving her very existence, the Irish Church was developing independence and producing certain differences of ritual and dress, which were later on a cause of its isolation, Rome considering these differences as schism. St. Patrick had endeavoured to institute the complete Roman method, but after his death the prevailing tribal system had influenced the Church, making it distinct from the distant and little-known Rome. The chief differences consisted in celebrating Easter according to the old reckoning of the Christians before St. Patrick, and the practice of

a peculiar tonsure for the priests, the Druidical form, from ear to ear. Undoubtedly Ireland's isolation at this period, and the development of a peculiar Irish Church, was a cause of additional trouble in later times.

While Ireland had attained a considerable reputation in the ecclesiastical world, in the secular she was still in a backward condition. The towns were merely collections of huts built of wood, and even the strongholds of the chiefs were very rough and primitive, the art of



St. Columba's Crozier.

## Before the Conquest

building in stone being practically unknown. But in certain forms of art the Irish were extremely skilful, as the gold ornaments to be seen in the museums witness. The famous Book of Kells is a masterpiece of illumination, and the numerous stone crosses of this period show very delicate carving. Music was much loved, the harper being a welcome guest everywhere, his proficiency over his instrument being remarked upon some time later when the English came to Ireland. As will be noticed, the arts were those of the monastery rather than of the outer world, road-making and bridge-building being still performed in a rude and primitive method.

It was not until the end of the eighth century that Ireland had to face any invading foe, her stormy ocean protecting her from enemies. But rough seas could not deter the Norsemen, who at last appeared in their dragon ships upon the eastern coast. The invaders experienced little opposition, the tribes, torn by local jealousies, not knowing how to combine against a common foe. Thorgils, one of the Norse leaders, sailed into the mouth of the Liffey, and marching inland made for Armagh, where he attacked and burnt the cathedral, slaughtered the monks, and attempted to restore paganism. Everywhere he went Thorgils spread misery and disaster, plundering and burning the churches, and killing every priest he found. His cruelties provoked his death, for the persecuted people rose against him, and he was drowned in Lake Owel. The Danes continued to descend upon Ireland, bringing their families with them. They mostly settled on the coast, building the fortified towns of Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, and Wexford.

## Ireland

The Round Towers of Ireland, which are peculiar to the country, are a witness to the life of perpetual danger and terror of the eighth and ninth centuries. None were built earlier than this period, and all are connected with churches or monastic buildings, being undoubtedly erected as places of refuge from the Danes

for the clergy and sacred possessions of the church. Directly warning came of the approach of the Danes, the gold and silver vessels were carried by the monks to the tower, a ladder being placed to reach the only door, some 10 or 20 feet above ground. Once inside a well-provisioned tower, the priests were safe, fire only being capable of forcing them out.

In England the Danes came at first as a scourge, but afterwards mingled with the Saxon people and settled down under peaceful government, Cnut,

the Danish King, sitting upon the English throne. But in Ireland the Danes came "with power to ruin, but without power to reconstruct." Owing to differences of race they never really intermixed with the Irish, remaining hated foes to them, and little trace of Danish blood is to be found in the population.

At last an Irishman arose who, by his capacity and warlike genius, mastered the Danes and made himself supreme in the land. Like St. Patrick, Brian Boru



Round Tower at Swords, near Dublin.

## Before the Conquest

has suffered from legends which have obscured his real personality, but through the mist of miraculous story he stands out as a great figure in Irish history. Unfortunately he left no one to carry on his good work. Brian became king of Munster in 976, after the murder of his brother Mahon, and by conquering the Danes succeeded in driving them within the shelter of their towns. Brian's ambitious nature made him strive after the position of supreme king, an object he was able to obtain, King Malachy, yielding to Brian's vigorous onslaught, agreeing to retire into private life upon his own property. For twelve years Ireland enjoyed a rare interval of peace under the strong rule of a wise and just man ; some of the ruin caused by the Danes was repaired, churches were rebuilt, roads made, and bridges erected. One of the prevailing traditions of the reign is that a lovely maiden, richly bedecked with jewels, could travel unmolested from one end of Ireland to the other.

In 1014, when Brian was getting an old man, he had to face a serious combination of foes. The men of Leinster rose in rebellion and joined the Danes, who were restive under Brian's firm hand. Scandinavian kinsmen from the Orkney Islands and Northumbria gathered a fleet and came to the assistance of the Danes, who fought their last great fight at Clontarf, just to the north of Dublin. With King Brian was his former foe, King Malachy, his own five sons, and all the forces of Ireland. The battle took place upon Good Friday, lasting from sunrise to sunset, and ended in the utter defeat of the Danes, who never after were any serious cause of trouble.

But, unluckily for Ireland, Brian was slain together

# Ireland

with his eldest son, and the country once more became a prey to tribal feuds. The chiefs all wished to copy Brian's example of seizing the monarchy ; but having no trace of his capacity, anarchy and confusion reigned until the arrival of a new invader—this time it was the Norman. Just at the time when William the Conqueror was thrusting the feudal system upon England, welding it into a compact nation, Ireland was falling back in its civilization, progress being impossible during the perpetual strife of tribe against tribe. King after king arose, but not one powerful enough to control the country, till Roderick O'Conor appeared as the last native king, who was forced to own himself a vassal of the English monarch.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMING OF THE NORMANS

By the middle of the twelfth century the prevailing anarchy and confusion in Ireland made its conquest by an invading foe not only probable, but almost inevitable. As Dr. Richey says, "Ireland seemed to invite a conqueror," her social disorder being such that conquest by an order-loving ruler seemed almost righteous.

The immediate cause of invasion was due to the brutal savagery of Dermot Macmurragh, the king of Leinster, who had outraged even the loose morals then prevalent among the tribes. Deposed from his kingdom by Roderick O'Conor, the overlord of Ireland, Dermot had sought refuge in England, offering allegiance to Henry II., and asking assistance against his enemies. King Henry, though he had already had some intentions of descending on Ireland, was too much occupied

## The Coming of the Normans

with his own kingdom just then to proceed in person, but he granted permission for his knights to aid Dermot. The Norman knights were eager to enlist, the opportunity of fighting, combined with a prospect of glory and land, holding out strong inducements. The leaders of the invading party were Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke (usually known as Strongbow), Robert Fitzstephen, and Maurice Fitzgerald. Accompanying the Normans as their chronicler was the Welsh priest, Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales, from whose account, brilliant and fascinating, but far from impartial, we gain our chief knowledge of this period.

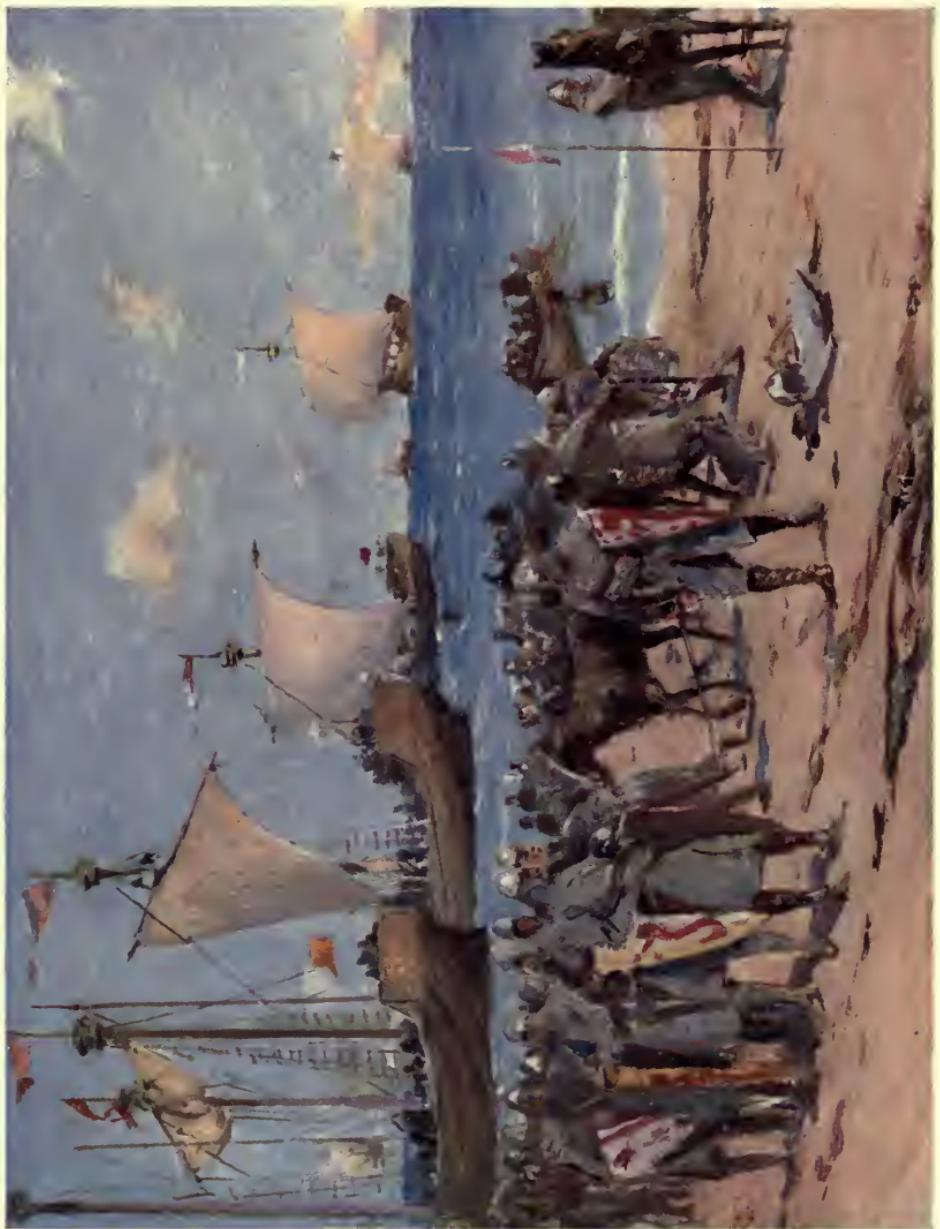
Fitzstephen landed in Ireland in 1169 with a small force of some 500 men, but all of them efficient and well-trained soldiers, equipped with the best weapons of the time. Joined by Dermot and his tribesmen, the Normans attacked Wexford, which they took after some difficulty, and then marched inland to meet the men of Ossory, who had gathered an army to resist the invaders. Enticing the Celtic levies into the plain, Fitzstephen charged them with his horsemen and cut them to pieces. Shortly afterwards, terms were made with King Roderick, who restored Leinster to Dermot. The following year Strongbow arrived with another Norman contingent, took Waterford, in which city he married Eva, the daughter of Dermot, whose heir he now became—and then proceeded northwards towards Dublin. The Danish castle at Dublin seems to have been destroyed after the Battle of Clontarf, for the city soon fell to Strongbow's men, the Danes under their leader Hasculf taking flight in their ships. Troubles now began for the hitherto conquering Normans. Dermot had died, leaving his kingdom of Leinster to

## Ireland

Strongbow, and enemies were gathering everywhere. Hasculf Thorgilsson returned with a fleet, storming Dublin from the sea, while shortly afterwards Roderick besieged it from the land. Surrounded by foes, the garrison determined on a desperate sally, which so surprised the Irish that they fled panic-stricken. Strongbow then returned to England to pacify King Henry, who was growing jealous of his powerful subject.

Owing to the independence of the Irish Church, it had come into disfavour with Rome, who considered it quite heretical, and who therefore encouraged Henry II. in his proposed conquest of the country, in order that it should be brought back into complete submission to Papal authority. Pope Adrian IV., being an Englishman, possibly entertained some national feeling when he issued a Bull permitting Henry to enter Ireland and "to execute therein whatever shall pertain to the honour of God and welfare of the land." Armed with this authority, Henry landed at Waterford in the autumn of 1171, bringing with him so large an army that resistance was practically impossible. A great majority of the chiefs submitted, Roderick being among their number. Henry entertained them lavishly at Dublin, where he instituted a rough kind of feudalism, the chiefs rendering their land to him to receive it back again as vassals. To the Irish, King Henry took the place of their overlord, who had possessed mere nominal power, very different to that of a feudal king, who claimed a man's lands when he no longer did service for them. This distinction was the cause of much trouble in the future.

With the natural governing capacity of the Normans, Henry proceeded to plan a new system for Ireland.

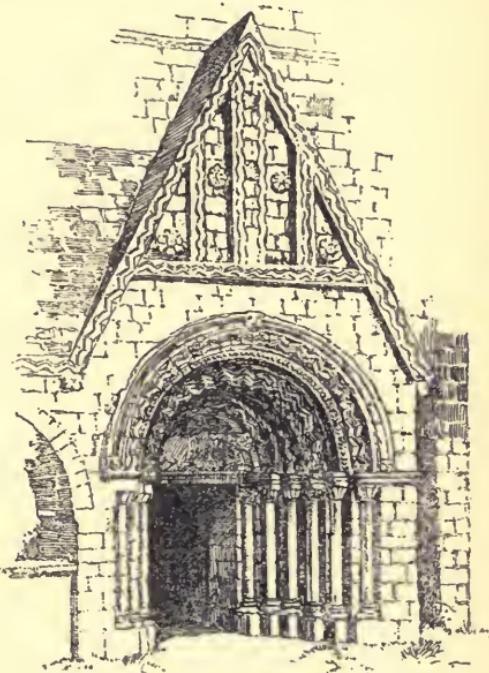




## The Coming of the Normans

The country was divided into counties, and English law instituted, with circuit judges. A synod of the church was held at Cashel, where the Irish Church was brought into line with the English, and where Henry was acknowledged as "Lord and King at the hand of Providence." It is not known how many of the Irish clergy accepted this, but it is certain that the Irish Church was very little altered.

After about six months in Ireland, Henry was recalled suddenly to England on learning that papal legates were on their way to inquire concerning the murder of Becket. According to Sir John Davies, a Tudor statesman, Henry "departed from Ireland without striking one blow, or building one castle, or planting one garrison among the Irish," and therefore left the country to an inevitable return to disorder. It is a commonplace that a well-organized country under one king is easier to conquer than a wild country split up among different rulers. The Norman Conquest had been purely superficial, the chiefs surrendering in name, but remaining independent in their own inaccessible districts, beyond the reach of



Doorway, Cormack's Chapel at Cashel.

## Ireland

law, unless accompanied by an armed force. Dense forests, swamps, and mountains prevented the easy movements of disciplined troops, so that royal authority would have been difficult to maintain in any case ; but had Henry II. thoroughly subdued Ireland, leaving no corner undisturbed, and then left a strong force to carry out the orders of a powerful central government, the history of the country would have undoubtedly been changed and centuries of unhappiness been spared. Instead of this a weak colony was left, settled on lands confiscated from natural owners during the Norman Conquest, the colonists unable to do more than hold their own ; while the Celtic population remained in a state of wild disorder, far removed from that ideal of perfect conquest held by Davies, “which doth reduce all people thereof to the condition of subjects ; and those I call subjects which are governed by the ordinary laws and magistrates of the sovereign.”

Though unable to attend to Ireland himself, Henry II. sent over his youngest son, Prince John, a mere boy, to keep order in Ireland. But the Prince and his frivolous courtiers only created tumult, annoying both the Celtic chiefs and the Anglo-Norman settlers by their careless and insulting behaviour, till the young Prince was recalled. When John became king his attitude towards Ireland changed ; he ordered his governor to build Dublin Castle, there being no safe place for the treasury, and came himself in 1210 to extend his authority and to consolidate the conquest commenced by his father. Again the Celtic chiefs made submission to the English king, who portioned out more of the land into counties, almost up to the Shannon, and then, leaving commands for castles to

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be built, he returned to England. Ireland remained almost unaltered by his visit, for the Celtic chiefs did as they liked in their own territory, while the Norman nobles, settled on the fertile eastern part of Ireland, maintained a condition of feudal tyranny. Impartial law did not exist, there being no force to carry out its dictates, and anarchy continued to prevail in Ireland.

A little over a century after King John's visit, the English were almost driven out of Ireland. The O'Neills invited Edward Bruce, the younger brother of King Robert of Scotland, to attempt the conquest of Ireland. Landing with a large army in 1315, Edward Bruce was joined by most of the Irish chiefs, and was crowned king at Carrickfergus. King Robert came over to assist his brother, and together they spread over Ireland, carrying destruction with them. The English were utterly unable to resist so powerful a force, and were in imminent danger of annihilation; but Edward Bruce's own tactics brought him to disaster and death. He had burnt and pillaged the country mercilessly, revenging Scotland's wrongs on the English settlers, till famine and pestilence stalked the land. An English army was sent over to help the colonists, who, making a supreme effort, overthrew the Scottish army at Dundalk, where Edward Bruce was slain. The English had been saved, but at a severe cost, the colonists long remaining enfeebled and powerless.

From this time until the coming of the Tudors the power of the English in Ireland began to decline. The fundamental cause of this decline was the feebleness of the original conquest, so fatally easy to accomplish at first, but never really completed. The lack of English colonists, who remained few in numbers, and the feudal

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oppression of the Anglo-Norman nobles, united to prevent the spread of English law and authority. But the greatest misfortune was the absence of the king. Royal power was a blessing to the general population in the Middle Ages, the king acting as a restraint upon the insurgent barons, and when the kings were feeble or absent their subjects suffered. For nearly two centuries after King John's visit, no English king had landed on Irish shores, the unhappy island being left a prey to greed, tyranny, and lawlessness. No attempt at an organized policy was carried on with regard to Ireland, an evil from which she still suffers, each Viceroy acting upon the system which seemed to him best. Some came to enrich themselves at the expense of Anglo-Irish and Celt alike, others to subdue the power of the great feudal nobles, while others maintained the feudal power in its full force. These constant changes of policy naturally resulted in perpetual feuds, animosities, and general disorder. The English Pale, that district peopled by the English settlers and ruled by English law, became more and more restricted. At one time it had almost reached the Shannon, then it was limited to the four counties of Meath, Louth, Dublin, and Kildare, and finally it was confined to a mere strip along the coast, twenty miles wide, stretching from Dundalk to the mountains of Wicklow.

In Celtic Ireland, consisting of nearly three-quarters of the whole island, the impression of the Norman Conquest, always slight, was almost effaced. The Irish chiefs lived in their old lawless way, only influenced for the worse by the feudal system, which had broken up the family tribal idea, leaving the chief the arbitrary head of his clan. Instead of a communistic system,

## The Coming of the Normans

all members of a clan possessing some claim to the land, the chief had obtained almost the sole rights, thus lowering his free people to the position of subject vassals. But along with this veneer of feudalism many old tribal and barbarous customs remained.

Two great families, both originally Anglo-Norman, swayed the destinies of Ireland. The Butlers, ancestors of the ducal house of Ormond, owned vast possessions, ruling them with almost regal power. The Fitzgeralds, who included the House of Kildare and the Desmonds, reigned from the wild district in the west among the hills and lakes of Kerry up to the county of Kildare, on the edge of the Pale. Both families were received at the court of the English Kings, though they kept the land in a state of feud, their adherents, like the Border raiders, being engaged in a life of freebooting expeditions for plunder and pillage. A certain amount of civilization had arisen in the island, a considerable trade was carried on between Galway and Spain, and stately abbeys and strong castles were built. But while England was attaining greater freedom and growing in power, Ireland was torn by petty wars and hindered from the progression which only peace can produce.

Those Anglo-Norman nobles who lived far removed from English influence gradually conformed to Irish ways and methods, becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves," using native dress and speech, sinking to the level of the less civilized Celts. The Desmonds soon became classed among these "degenerate Englishry," as their land lay almost solely among the native Irish, with only a small sprinkling of English settlers.

The worst sufferers under these unsettled conditions

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were, naturally, the lowest classes, crushed by the all-powerful nobles and Celtic chiefs, who lived in rude luxury while the tillers of the soil existed in wretchedness. Anglo-Irish baron and Irish chief continued to raid upon one another, gaily carrying off cattle and burning the crops upon which the poor labourer depended.

Not only had the invading English settled upon the land of the Irish, but they had brought their own Church with them ; for the Irish regarded the regular Papal system inaugurated at the Synod of Cashel as quite different to their native Catholic Church. Racial dislike kept the two Churches separate, though the points of difference were really trivial ones. Both Churches were alike in failing to produce men of distinction in learning or piety, no colleges or Universities were founded to be the nursery for wise leaders of the people, and general ignorance prevailed. As for the law, it differed like the Churches. English law was administered in the Pale in an extremely partial form, the native Irish being outside its justice. If an Irishman murdered an Englishman, he was condemned to death ; but if the crime were committed the reverse way, no penalty was inflicted on the Englishman. A shadowy Parliament, meeting at Dublin, Drogheda, or Kilkenny, summoned at the arbitrary pleasure of the English king, carried out the wishes of the governing powers. No representatives of the native Irish sat in this Parliament. The most bitter Act passed by this unrepresentative assembly was that known as the Statute of Kilkenny. Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III., had come over to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and also to obtain the earldom of Ulster,

## The Coming of the Normans

which had become his through his marriage with the heiress. At his bidding the Parliament met at Kilkenny, and proceeded to concoct legislation to prevent the mingling of the two races which was then going on, with the ultimate idea of exterminating the Irish altogether. According to the Statute of Kilkenny, intermarriage with the Irish was to be regarded as treason, the using of the Irish language or dress by an Englishman involved imprisonment and forfeiture of property, and no Irishman was to hold any office whatever in the government. Owing to the enormous predominance of the Irish people and the growing feebleness of the English colony, this aggressive law never became effective.

After an absence of nearly 200 years, an English king again set foot upon Irish shores in 1394, of course accompanied by a large army to crush his Irish subjects ; for Ireland, as one recent writer puts it, was an “unhappy country which for centuries never saw its kings but as invaders.” A very serious rebellion, headed by a certain chieftain named Art MacMurrough, had at last forced pleasure-loving Richard II. to leave his luxurious Court, with the idea of gaining glory by fighting the Irish. If he was to remain Lord of Ireland any longer, it was necessary for him to come at once, and to come backed with the power of England. Art MacMurrough was lording it over the colonists, extracting a tribute from them known as “Black Rent,” and no one was able to resist his furious onslaught. Richard II. arrived at Waterford with a vast army, sufficient to overawe any Irish forces, and the same story repeated itself as on the two previous occasions of a royal visit. The Irish chieftains submitted,

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Richard entertained them at Dublin, and honoured four of them with knighthood, one being Art MacMurrough himself. But no sooner had Richard returned to England than rebellion broke out again, the Viceroy, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, being slain. In great anger Richard again descended on Ireland in 1399, but this time his army did not frighten Art MacMurrough, who kept his own small force hidden in the woods, refusing to be drawn into the open. Sickness spread in the English camp owing to the wet weather, obliging Richard to open negotiations with MacMurrough, and terms were still unarranged when news from England caused Richard to leave Ireland to its fate. His dangerous rival, Henry of Lancaster, had returned from exile, and had landed in Yorkshire, where the English were flocking to his banner. Richard collected his army and sailed across to Milford Haven, to find that his cause was already lost. Within a short time he was a captive, to suffer an obscure death some years later. English aid being always spasmodic, the colonists of the Pale had again to submit to Art MacMurrough's exactions, and pay his "Black Rent" until his death, in 1417.

Left to the mercy of various viceroys by the kings of the House of Lancaster, who were either busily engaged in maintaining their throne or trying to add France to their domains, Ireland became more and more given up to personal feuds and general disorder and misery. The Wars of the Roses, which for ever broke the power of the English nobility, left the commonalty of England practically untouched, the ordinary course of commerce and justice being little interrupted. But the wars of the rival Houses of

## Under the Tudors

York and Lancaster brought fresh cause of famine, bloodshed, and destruction, to the Irish people. The Duke of York had been viceroy in 1449, when he had won much love by his justice and conciliatory manners. During the contest many English from the Pale and Anglo-Irish nobles fought in England, and carried on the spirit of feud in Ireland till the English colony was almost extinguished. The Fitzgeralds were Yorkists, and in the triumph of their party rose supreme above the Butlers, who had supported the Lancastrians. In gratitude for their services, the head of the Fitzgeralds was appointed Viceroy by Edward IV., and for many years his family was predominant over the fortunes of Ireland.

### CHAPTER III

#### UNDER THE TUDORS

HENRY VII., the founder of the Tudor dynasty, had ascended the throne in 1485, but his tenure of it was uncertain. Yorkist feeling still ran high, and nowhere was it more keen than in the English Pale in Ireland, where the Duke of York, who fell at Wakefield, was remembered with affection. When the young impostor, Lambert Simnel, arrived in Dublin, announcing himself as the grandson of the Duke of York, and heir to the throne, he was welcomed with enthusiasm, and crowned with full ceremony as Edward VI. Nearly all the great nobles of the Pale, with the Earl of Kildare at their head, supported the youth, and followed him to England, largely increasing the original army of 2,000 German mercenaries under Martin Schwartz, with which Simnel had been supplied by the Yorkist

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Duchess of Burgundy. A rapid disaster at Stoke in Nottingham quelled the rebellion, many of the leaders dying on the field, Simnel being captured and contemptuously pardoned by King Henry, who made the claimant of the throne a turnspit in his kitchen.

A few years later, Henry, being more settled in England, turned his attention to Ireland, where he found the Pale dominated by the Anglo-Irish nobles, who had little regard for the Crown. Determining to alter this state of affairs, the King sent over Sir Edward Poynings as Viceroy, with powers to effect drastic changes in the government. Supported by an army, and with English officials to replace the Irish, Poynings landed in Ireland in 1494 and summoned a Parliament at Drogheda, where the famous act was passed which bears his name. By this law no legislation could be discussed in the Irish Parliament until it had received approval from the King and his Council in England, and at the same time all English laws were made binding in Ireland. Destined to be a source of intense irritation and disaffection in the succeeding centuries, it remained in force until 1782, when the Irish Parliament achieved its brief independence. Originally intended as a means of checking the power of the nobles, who were responsible for much ill-considered and arbitrary legislation, and also as a means of spreading the English law and royal authority, Poynings' Law became in later times the vehicle of interference by the English Parliament, who knew little of Irish affairs.

Though Poynings had carried out royal instructions, he was soon recalled, and Gerald the Great, the eighth Earl of Kildare, restored to his old position of Lord Deputy. Kildare was a man of commanding stature,

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considerable administrative powers, and possessed of general capacity and resourcefulness. Pardoned by King Henry for his share in Simnel's rebellion, and allowed still to act as viceroy, he had been accused of treason at the Drogheda Parliament, and sent a prisoner to the Tower of London. After a year's confinement he was brought before the King, who was pleased with his audacity and wit, and also by his adroit flattery. When informed that "all Ireland cannot govern this man," Henry is said to have replied, "Then this man shall govern all Ireland." It is at any rate certain that Kildare returned to his office and ruled Ireland till his death, in 1513. He remained entirely loyal to the king, maintaining royal authority, and doubtless at the same time that of his own house, and by his personal power and forceful administration subdued the Celts and kept the country in fair order. He was succeeded by his son, the ninth Earl, who for a time was high in favour with Henry VIII., being endowed with many of the winning qualities of his family. Unfortunately for him, he indulged in reckless behaviour in Ireland, carrying on the old-time raids upon his enemies, and, though twice pardoned by the King and restored to power, he finally died a prisoner in the Tower. His impetuous young son, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, known as "Silken Thomas," either from the badge of silk worn upon the helmets of his followers or from the rich display of his dress, heard a rumour that his father had been executed, and, without waiting for confirmation, instantly threw off his allegiance to King Henry, and at the head of the Geraldine forces attacked Dublin. For a time he was successful. Skeffington, sent over from England with an army,

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remained inactive in Dublin for some months, while Ormond, the hereditary foe of the Fitzgeralds, fought and harassed Lord Thomas, who had become the Earl of Kildare through his father's death in prison. At last Skeffington moved, attacked the Kildare stronghold, the Castle of Maynooth, and by the aid of artillery took a castle hitherto thought impregnable. With this capture and the cruel treatment to the prisoners the rebellion ended. Lord Thomas, after holding out for a little longer, finally surrendered, thinking his life was to be spared ; but royal clemency for the House of Kildare had been strained too far, and after a year's imprisonment he and five uncles with him were hanged at Tyburn. The only representative left of the Geraldines of Leinster was a boy of twelve, who managed to escape the general doom of his house, being protected by the faithful adherents of his family.

Under Henry VIII. the first systematic effort to bring Ireland into union with England was attempted. Surrey, one of the viceroys who held brief sway, urged his monarch to reconquer Ireland thoroughly by military force, and then to settle English colonists on the land ; but Henry wished to obtain the desired end—the subjection to royal authority and “the reduction of the said land to a due civility and obedience and the advancement of the public weale of the same”—by conciliatory methods. He was even willing to allow the exercise of the Irish laws when they were as efficient as the English in maintaining order. By his consideration and courtesy to the Irish chiefs, making many of them earls after the English feudal system, and inviting them to his Court, he hoped to bind them to his throne. But King Henry's policy and that of

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his successors, though at first conciliatory, "gradually," as Mr. Dunlop observes, "and to all appearance, inevitably developed into one of a directly opposite tendency."

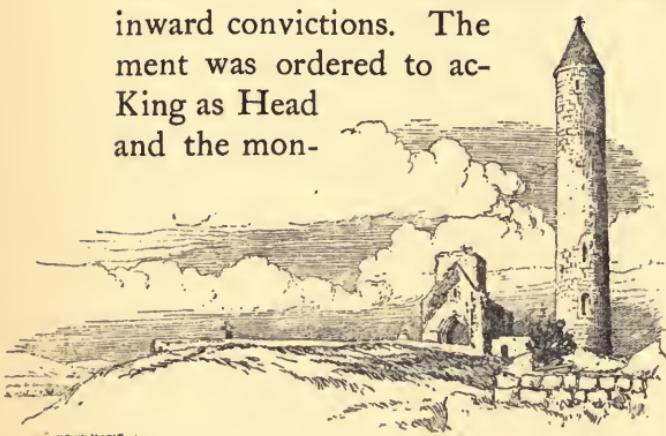
There is no question that Ireland was an extremely difficult country to govern, however admirable the wishes of the king in distant England. A king was needed on the spot, with an army ready to put down risings and to keep justice and order, with councillors chosen from both races in the country, whose interest and honour would be bound up in the land. But this Ireland was never destined to obtain. Henry VIII. found Ireland distraught with faction, possessing no national spirit, each chief and Anglo-Irish noble fighting for himself, sometimes combining for a short time, but only to break away again. The mass of the population was totally ignorant and little removed from the early barbaric life of the original Celtic inhabitants of the land, their condition being sympathetically described in the following question asked in one of the State Papers—"What common folk in all this world is so poor, so feeble, so evil beseen in town and field, so bestial, so greatly oppressed and trodden under foot, fares so evil, with so great misery, and with so wretched a life, as the common folk of Ireland?" A certain amount of commerce was carried on between the chief seaports and England and the Continent : Bristol shipped goods to Dublin, Galway was a port for Spanish trade, and Cork was the entrance for French wines. But this intercourse had but slight effect upon the country as a whole. It has been well observed that, "of those larger influences which were transforming the face of Europe politically, intellectually, and morally, Ireland knew

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nothing. The wave of the Renaissance expended its force without touching her shores."

Had Henry VIII. not wished to marry Anne Boleyn, he might possibly have succeeded in establishing better permanent conditions in Ireland ; but, his matrimonial desires bringing him into a breach with Rome, Ireland was forced into line with the Reformation, without any inward convictions. The King as Head and the mon-

Irish Parliament acknowledged the of the Church, monasteries began to be dissolved. This arbitrary act caused little disturbance. At that time neither Celtic nor English Church had much hold on the people, who and plundered.



Round Tower and Ruins of the Monastery on Devenish Island, Lough Erne.

during their perpetual wars burnt religious houses with equanimity. Moreover, the priests were corrupt, slothful, and ignorant, many parishes were left without anyone to look after the spiritual life of the district, and only in some of the monasteries did real religion flourish at all. At the Parliament of 1541, where Irish chieftains for the first time assembled with the Anglo-Irish lords, all the alterations in the Church system were accepted, and Henry acknowledged as King and not merely "Lord" of Ireland, by the nobles and chiefs, who had eagerly participated in the spoil of the Church lands. Ireland having been the

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nominal gift from the Pope to Henry II., it had been found necessary for Henry VIII. to claim his kingdom formally, and no longer to remain a vassal lord of Rome.

A rising took place which was declared to be a religious one, but which was obviously not the outburst of a people against interference with their sacred beliefs, but merely the common rebellion of a family indignant at harsh treatment. The relatives and connections of the Kildares rose, and tried to gain support from the Pope and the Catholic Emperor, but, failing to obtain this, they were soon put down. During Mary's brief reign Catholicism was restored, Mass was again celebrated, and the sacred images replaced in the churches. These changes seem to have been acquiesced in almost with indifference by the general population.

Queen Elizabeth, resembling her royal father in so many of his characteristics, endeavoured to follow his policy with regard to Ireland, but failed as he did. She was beset with many difficulties and surrounded by enemies, declared illegitimate by the Catholic powers, who invited her subjects to rebel, and hindered by want of money from carrying out any large schemes. Starting with the ideal of treating Ireland with justice and kindness, she was led by force of circumstances into countenancing the most horrible cruelties, and to permitting wars abundant in devastation and atrocities. As one writer puts it, "It was inauspicious that the work of constructing a stable government should have begun in Ireland centuries later than in the rest of Western Europe; that it should have been accompanied by a dispossession of the people from their lands, and the unsparing use of fire and famine as well as of the sword; that the venom of religious hatred

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should have been added to the hostility of races in different stages of civilization."

Two years after her accession to the throne a Parliament met in Dublin and established in legal form the English Church system, the compromise effected between the two extreme forms of religion by the Elizabethan councillors. A new prayer-book was ordered to be used, the mass was converted into the sacrament, the old ritual service abolished, a new liturgical system instituted, and all services were to be read in English. Again it is surprising that this sweeping change evoked no general rising, the chief feeling against it being that it was the work of the English, who seemed greedy to obtain all Ireland for themselves. The penalties for non-compliance with the new order of religion were not very severe—merely a fine of twelve pence for non-attendance at church on Sunday. Those priests who suffered death during Elizabeth's reign did so, not because of their faith, but because they were rebels to her government. Many Catholic writers, however, regard them as martyrs, maintaining that they were innocent of anything worthy of such severity.

The first serious trouble with which Elizabeth had to contend in Ireland was connected with Shane O'Neill, a younger son of the O'Neill who had been created Earl of Tyrone by Henry VIII. On the death of his father Shane was chosen as the chief of his clan, regardless of the English custom of descent through the eldest son. Taking up the cause of the legitimate heir, as they considered Shane's young nephew, the son of his elder brother, the English Government attacked Shane, who, however, proved himself no easy

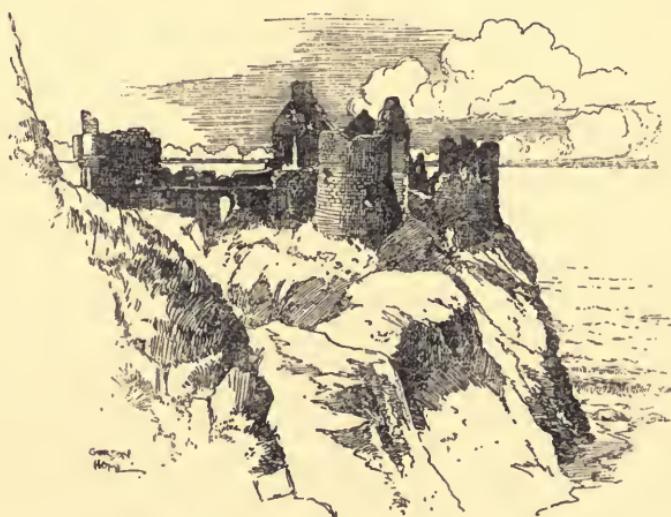
## Under the Tudors

foe to deal with. So successful was Shane in the way he managed his rude forces that the English commander came to terms with him, and Shane agreed to go to England and interview the Maiden Queen personally. At that meeting the fierce, uncultured Irish chieftain, with his "saffron mantle sweeping round and round him, his hair curling on his back and clipped short below the eyes, which gleamed from under it with a grey lustre, frowning, fierce, and cruel," followed by his clansmen bearing battle-axes, faced the distinguished courtiers of Elizabeth's throne. He pleased the Queen with his flattery and skilful arguments, but she detained him in London a semi-prisoner till he agreed to terms in order to escape. Once back in his own country, he broke all promises, and ruled as king in Ulster, acting wisely and justly as a chieftain, but rashly ignoring the power of England, which he openly defied. In the end his enemies closed round him, his brother chieftains joining with the English to accomplish his overthrow. Forced to seek shelter with some of his hereditary foes, the brave but turbulent chieftain met his death in an obscure drunken quarrel. In Irish poetry Shane is represented as an ideal patriot, while his English contemporaries considered him an unscrupulous villain ; whereas he was, as far as one can judge, a typical Celtic chieftain, possessing many warlike virtues and some administrative capacity, but entirely lacking in any national aspiration, fighting his tribal foes with as much zest as the English.

After the death of Shane a temporary period of rest occurred, to be followed in 1579 by a war of such atrocity that it can never be read without a feeling of horror that it could have taken place among civilized

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people. The Desmond Geraldines owned almost the whole south-west corner of Ireland, a vast territory of wild hills, fertile valleys, and impenetrable forests, and they ruled it with regal powers. Gerald, the last Earl of Desmond, a craven, vacillating specimen of his house, was kept a captive in England as a kind of hostage for the good behaviour of his followers, who were constantly at warfare with the Butlers, then high



Dunluce Castle, Co. Antrim, built by the M'Quillans in Tudor Times.

in favour with Elizabeth. Sir James Fitzmaurice, cousin of Desmond, escaped to the Continent after heading an abortive rising of the Desmond clansmen, indignant at the rumour that their whole lands were to be parcelled out among English settlers. Fitzmaurice, the only capable leader of the Geraldines, urged his cause at every Catholic Court in Europe, and succeeded in gaining help from the Pope and some vague promises from Philip II. of Spain. Return-

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ing to Munster with a small force, and a sacred banner blessed by the Pope, Fitzmaurice roused the whole forces of the province, whose untrained, ill-armed men flocked to fight for their old leaders. Desmond, who had been released, joined the rising, which was doomed from the start, owing to the murder of Fitzmaurice by a local tribe, more absorbed by a petty jealousy than the threatened extinction of their race. Unable to meet the English soldiers in open battle, and without any efficient leader, the Desmond clansmen hid among the forests, dashing out to slaughter small parties of the English, who proceeded to lay waste the country in a most cold-blooded and thorough manner. Castles were razed, all captives, regardless of sex or age, were ruthlessly slaughtered, houses burnt, and crops destroyed, till the land was an arid desert. The Irish retaliated when they could, but Desmond early gave up hope, and only hurried from one hiding-place to another. Help arrived from Spain too late to assist the rising. A landing was made at Smerwick Bay in Kerry and a fort built and armed ; but on the arrival of Lord Grey de Wilton the Spaniards surrendered, and as mercy "was not thought good to show them," as Spenser tells us, they were all killed in cold blood. For four years this terrible guerilla warfare went on, the rebel clansmen still proving dangerous in their hiding-places ; but at last, worn out with ceaseless war and starvation, the Irish submitted, the ghastly condition of pardon for a rebel being the production of an Irishman's head. So peace at last was obtained, when the people of Munster had no longer the strength to fight. The poet Spenser, an eyewitness, and not an over-sympathetic one, describes their condition : "They were brought

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to such wretchedness that any stony heart would rue the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came, creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death ; they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves."

To prevent any further disorders in Munster, Desmond's forfeited lands (he had been slain in Kerry) were to be divided among English owners, with strict conditions that the owners were to live on their lands, to build houses, and to bring over English working people to farm the land. The natives were to retire to the waste lands and live how they could, the real wish of the Government being that they should become extinct. But in spite of the conditions the English owners managed to evade them ; very few English labourers cared to risk their lives among the sullen dispossessed Irish, who were ready to pounce upon their property at any moment. The few Englishmen who did come over were soon merged among the native population, and the problem of the government of Ireland remained as unsolved as ever.

Munster had been crushed, but Ireland was still rebellious, as she was likely to remain, considering that no chief or noble felt his lands secure. At any time his property might be taken from him on some flimsy excuse, and handed over to an Englishman. The wholesale confiscation of land was the chief cause, far predominating over the religious differences, of the seething discontent of the country, whose native owners would naturally rise to protect their ancestral lands.

When Elizabeth was growing old and weary, another Irish rebellion arose, more dangerous than either of the

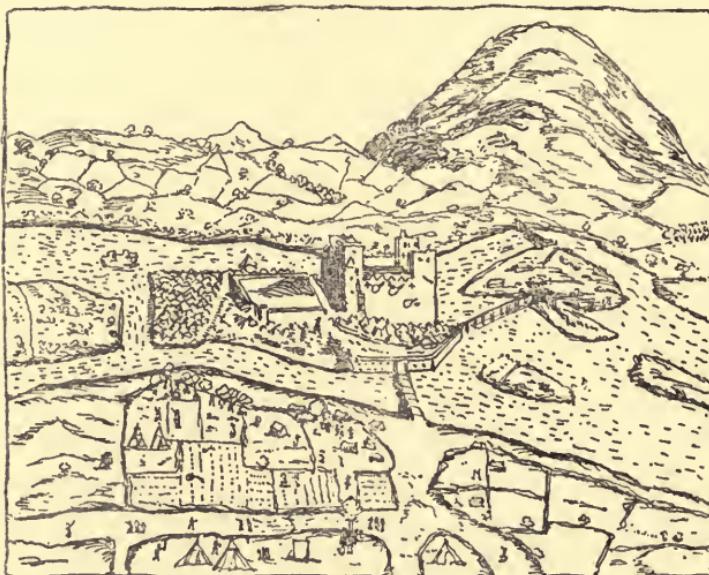
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preceding revolts against her government. It was headed by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, grandson of the first Earl, a man well known in Elizabeth's Court, where he had been brought up, learning all the culture and courtly grace of the time. For some years after attaining manhood he remained thoroughly loyal to the Queen, even helping the English to put down the Desmond rebellion, but later on he was forced to become a rebel himself. He saw that the English rulers had their eye upon Ulster, and also he had some personal wrongs to redress. Knowing the formidable power of the English, Tyrone sent emissaries to the Pope, pleading the cause of religion (a cause to which he was personally indifferent), and to Philip of Spain, asking for help, and in the meantime held the English at bay. Time and again he defeated the well-trained English soldiers, his rougher levies following their leader implicitly. Essex, the Queen's favourite, came with a large army, but did nothing effective, only having a private conference with Tyrone, when he arranged a truce which, considering the forces he commanded, was reckoned treasonable. Hearing unfavourable news from England, Essex hastily returned, having lost in Ireland all his reputation as a soldier.

Though constantly successful, Tyrone was not supported by a national party, and when help from Spain arrived, it came, as it always did, at an unfortunate time and place. Instead of landing in the North, close to Tyrone's army, they settled on Kinsale in the south, obliging Tyrone to march the length of Ireland to join them. Meanwhile Lord Mountjoy, who had succeeded Essex, had besieged the Spaniards by sea and land. When at last he arrived with his tired men, Tyrone

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was over-persuaded into attacking the English. He was defeated, hundreds of his followers slain, the Spaniards surrendered, and Tyrone was forced to retreat northwards. But though defeated he was still a danger, and Lord Mountjoy was only too anxious to make terms, knowing that Elizabeth's death was expected hourly. The terms of peace were generous



Cahir Castle, Co. Tipperary ; taken by the Earl of Essex  
in 1599.

*From an old print.*

—a full pardon for Tyrone and his followers, and lands and title to be retained by the Earl.

At last England's foes were crushed, but at the cost of justice and mercy. The only excuse that can be offered for the relentless cruelty and merciless policy of confiscation was that similar treatment was meted out to fallen foes by all the rulers of the time. Ireland at the end of Elizabeth's reign lay prostrate, gasping

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from her wounds. Land that had been fertile lay a desert, strewn with ruined castles and churches, and the people were homeless, faced with starvation and despair. At the time when England was making great strides in civilization, producing great writers and thinkers, vast numbers of the Irish people were living like barbarians, lacking even the necessities of life.

### CHAPTER IV

#### UNDER THE STUARTS

BETTER times seemed coming for Ireland when, upon the death of Queen Elizabeth, the thrones of England and Scotland were united under James I. The new King commenced his reign by granting a general pardon to the Irish people, the late deadly foes of England, Tyrone and O'Donnell, swearing allegiance to the monarch. The two Earls (O'Donnell was made Earl of Tyrconnel) were received with distinct favour at the English Court, and "all the clouds that lour'd upon" their house had apparently rolled away.

For the first time Englishmen and Irishmen were to be equal in the sight of the law, "every man indiscriminately taken into the favour of the King's majestie." The whole country was divided into shires, and the judges went on circuit as in England, theoretically enforcing the law upon noble and peasant. The English method of holding land and of hereditary succession were made obligatory, a system advantageous to the chiefs, who became sole owners of their land, which had hitherto been held on a loose kind of joint ownership with other members of the clan.

Great hopes had been entertained by the Catholics

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when James I. succeeded to the throne, for as the son of so devoted a Catholic as Mary, Queen of Scots, he was thought likely to grant toleration. But James had never shown any sympathy to his mother's faith, and he certainly could not have granted complete religious freedom, even if such a thing were possible under the existing conditions, owing to the strong Protestant feeling of his British subjects. At this time five-sixths of the Irish people were Catholics, whose priests were much under the power and authority of Rome, hating everything English. When it was known that the king was going to continue the Catholic disabilities, there was some trouble in Munster, where a certain Jesuit named White ordered Mass to be said publicly in the churches. A few Anglican clergy were forced to flee, but Mountjoy, the Viceroy, soon crushed the rising without recourse to any barbarities.

The sunshine of prosperity did not long shine upon Tyrone. Little or no evidence exists to prove that he was planning another rising, but apparently, hearing rumours that he was in danger, he fled, together with Tyrconnel and their families. They reached Rome, where they died not long afterwards. Flight was taken as evidence of guilt, the two Earls were declared traitors, and their lands, consisting of the six counties of Ulster—Armagh, Cavan, Londonderry, Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Donegal—declared forfeit to the Crown. Profiting by the mistakes of former plantations, no large tracts of lands were to be distributed to any one owner, for each new landlord was to dwell on his estate, which was to be farmed by men of English or Scottish blood. Bacon, with the assistance of Sir John Davies, Solicitor-General of Ireland, was responsible for this scheme,

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which turned out successful from the colonizing point of view. Ulster grew prosperous, the new farmers were industrious men getting the best out of the land, and manufactures were introduced. But the native Irish, who had been dispossessed, driven out to the hills and waste parts of the province, became more and more filled with a bitter enmity against their rulers, an enmity which was to find a terrible expression a generation later.

Englishmen were eager to get new land, and if it could be obtained without the trouble of crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and facing the dangers of an unknown continent, so much the better. Ireland became the prey for greedy adventurers, and no man's land was secure. As Judge O'Connor Morris states : " Obsolete claims to lands were set up by descendants of colonists of Plantagenet times ; hundreds of ancient royal grants were declared invalid ; the right of the Crown to large domains was asserted with success ; legal ingenuity and chicane were taxed to pick out flaws in titles." Many of the landowners in Connaught had not obtained title-deeds when their property was changed into a feudal tenure, but they secured possession for a short time (it was only a respite) by the payment of a large sum of money. Men of English blood, hitherto loyal, began to join with the native Irish, fearing the loss of their ancestral property.

To give legal form to the Plantation of Ulster and the attainder of the earls, a Parliament was summoned to Dublin in 1613. In order to obtain a Protestant majority (Catholics being now admitted), forty new boroughs were manufactured in Ulster, consisting of the towns yet to be built, not discoverable on any map,

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but which were entitled to send two members to Parliament. This naturally provoked the greatest indignation ; but though James allowed a petition to be presented to him, little redress was obtained, and through the new borough members the Plantation was duly confirmed.

Towards the end of James I.'s reign, Ireland, from a superficial point of view, seemed both peaceful and prosperous. The unhappy conditions prevailing in 1603, after the long and disastrous wars of Elizabeth's reign, had improved somewhat, and the new settlers had undoubtedly raised the prosperity of the country. That Ireland itself was a desirable place, in spite of its backwardness, Sir John Davies has left us a record, telling us of "the good temperature of the air ; the fruitfulness of the soil ; the pleasant and commodious seats for habitation ; the safe and large ports and havens lying open for traffic into all the west parts of the world ; the long inlets of many navigable rivers, and so many great lakes and fresh ponds within the land, as the like are not to be seen in any part of Europe ; the rich fishings and wild-fowl of all kinds ; and, lastly, the bodies and minds of the people endued with extraordinary abilities of nature." But underneath this fair semblance the native Irish were brooding over their wrongs in sullen discontent, half starved, robbed of their lands, and deprived of their chiefs.

When Charles I. succeeded his father he promised certain favours, known as "Graces," to the Connaught landowners, assuring them that sixty years' possession of their land was sufficient title-deed, and in return he obtained £120,000 from the grateful owners. These concessions were to be confirmed by Parliament, which

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was to be called immediately. Doubtless owing to the trouble he was caused by the English Parliament, Charles did not summon a Parliament, and his promises remained unratified.

One of the great authorities for this period has claimed that "the choice for Ireland in the seventeenth

century did not lie between absolutism and Parliamentary control, but between absolutism and anarchy." If this were indeed so—and students of Irish history are almost bound to admit its truth—then Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, the Viceroy who ruled Ireland under Charles I., had the makings of an ideal Governor. Strafford had no qualms about using despotic powers ; he ruled the country with an iron hand, forcing the nobility, the Church, and the peasantry, to obey his will. Disregarding the

Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.



"Graces" promised by his king, he turned out the Catholic landowners in Connaught, and by selling the land obtained money to raise an army ready to subdue Ireland and to help Charles I. in England. One benefit of absolutism was that, while Strafford reigned, his tyranny alone was to be feared ; no subordinates were allowed to crush those beneath them, and this in itself was enough to bring prosperity to a land usually torn by countless feuds. Under his rule Ireland made advances in outward prosperity, commerce and agriculture both became more flourishing, and, though the budding woollen manufacture was crushed in the interests of England, linen was introduced and encouraged

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by the Viceroy, who brought over weavers from Flanders to instruct the people.

When Strafford fell, being impeached by the English Parliament who secured his execution, no one succeeded him in Ireland with any power to control the Irish people suffering under their countless wrongs. Strafford's firm hand no longer guiding the reins of government, the dispossessed Irish in Ulster suddenly rose in rebellion in the autumn of 1641. So unexpected was their attack that the colonists for a time lay at their mercy, helpless before men from whom all pity had flown in a burning sense of injustice. The numbers of those who perished vary according to the prejudices of the writer, but many thousands undoubtedly died either from the relentless swords of the maddened Irish or from being turned out into the bitter cold of the night stripped of their clothing. When the colonists were able to recover from the first shock, they resisted the rebels and retaliated with fierce cruelty. The rebels had at first been led by Sir Phelim O'Neill, a man of no capacity, but afterwards a relative of Tyrone, Owen Roe O'Neill, took the command, and stopped the indiscriminate bloodshed, for which he declared his abhorrence.

Affairs in England being so unsettled, the Long Parliament preparing to fight the king, no real attempt was made to crush the rebellion, which grew daily. The Anglo-Irish, nearly all Catholics, joined the Irish under Owen Roe O'Neill, and, while still acknowledging King Charles, were determined to protect their religion and their land. The bond of religion was the only thing which held the triumphant Irish forces together, for the Anglo-Irish hated the shameful deeds

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perpetrated in the early days of the rising by the Celts of Ulster, while the Irishry were simply bent upon ejecting the English colonists. Still, such was the impotence of England at the time that, if there had only been a man of commanding power among the Irish, he might have knit together all the various factions in the country ; and, though he might have failed to keep the English out altogether, he could probably have forced such terms that the miseries of the eighteenth century would have been unknown.

Ormond, leading the small Royalist forces, was told by Charles to try to effect terms of peace with the Irish in order to gain their help against the English Parliament ; but when the limited toleration of the Catholics—all that Ormond was able to offer—was refused, Ormond himself gave up his command and retired from Ireland. After he left, the Irish began to suffer reverses from the Parliamentary troops, and Ormond was requested by the Royalist English, and most of the combined Irish then in arms, to return and lead them. According to the treaty arranged in January, 1649, Ormond promised, in the King's name, a greater freedom of worship to the Catholics. For a time Ormond's hope of restoring the King's authority seemed likely to be achieved, but all success vanished when Cromwell landed in Ireland in August, with a well-trained army of stern Puritan soldiers. Cromwell had come to fulfil a religious duty—to punish the Catholics for their cruelties during the rising in Ulster. With this in his mind, regarding all Catholics as enemies of God, he carried on a ruthless campaign, offering all the glory to God. At Drogheda and Wexford no quarter was shown, as he himself wrote :

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“I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants.” So great was the terror effected by this stern judicial slaughter—for it was not the thoughtless cruelty of ill-governed soldiers—that town after town surrendered to Cromwell, who proceeded on a conquering march through Ireland. Dissensions were rampant among the Irish, the Protestants under Ormond

being hated by the Catholics, who were now indignant that Charles II. should have proclaimed himself a Presbyterian to please the Scottish people. After Cromwell had returned to England, Ireton continued his work till the war was ended, after eight years of turmoil.

Cromwell looked upon Ireland as a conquered country inhabited by a people for whom

one need have no sympathy, as their religion was abominable and anti-Christian. In England, once the war was over, the Royalists were not entirely robbed of their lands, but allowed to return to them in peace. But it was otherwise in unfortunate Ireland. Both Protestants and Catholics had fought against the Parliament, who therefore considered the whole land forfeited to the State. Land was much needed to meet the Government’s obligations. The Parliamentarian soldiers were promised land to cover arrears of payment, and land, too, was demanded by those from whom the Government had borrowed money for this war. The method pursued was simple in the extreme. All Catholic land-



Drogheda Gateway.

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owners were ordered to quit their estates and remove westward to Connaught, leaving their lands to be divided among the new claimants. The peasantry were allowed to remain, but they had to witness the heartrending departure of their masters and mistresses, who by a certain date early in 1654 left the homes of their ancestors for the desolate wilds of Connaught. No wonder such a wholesale confiscation has burned deep into the memories of the Irish people.

Commissioned by Henry Cromwell, the Deputy, a survey of Ireland was made by Dr. Petty, who divided the land among the new owners. As under Strafford, Ireland made outward progress under the peace enforced by Cromwell's stern rule; but it was not a deep-rooted prosperity, being planted upon the sullen despair of the majority of the nation.

Upon the death of Cromwell, the restoration of Charles II. in Ireland was effected as easily as in England. But though restored to his throne, Charles was faced with many difficulties. Naturally, those who had been with him in exile and those who had fought for his father wanted some reward and the restoration of their estates. But that would mean the forcible ejection of all Cromwell's soldiers, and Charles was not anxious for any more fighting. Ormond regained his land with large accessions, together with a ducal title, and many others who had access to the royal ear managed to obtain their property or grants of land.



Oliver Cromwell.

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Most of those who had received their lands from Cromwell remained undisturbed, for a large part of the vast area confiscated under the Commonwealth was still unappropriated. Former Protestant owners and Royalist officers were satisfied after the King had gratified his special friends, and then came the Catholic claims. Whatever the change of English rulers might be, they were united in the policy of maintaining the English Protestant ascendancy, and King Charles, like all the Stuarts, had no special predilection for Ireland. Still, the Catholics had fought and suffered in the Stuart cause, so some attempt had to be made to meet their claims. Each Catholic owner had to satisfy the Judge of the Court of Claims, set up in Dublin, that he had taken no part in the Irish war before 1649, when Ormond had taken command for the King. It was hoped that this provision would exclude many, but far more passed the test than there was land with which to supply them. The Cromwellian colonists were forced to yield a portion of their property, which was then spread out among those Catholics who were considered "innocent," and the rest of the Catholic owners, some 3,000 of whom had never even had their "innocence" tested, were left to do the best they could for themselves. All this apportionment of land was made legal by the Act of Settlement.

During the greater part of this reign Ireland was governed by the Duke of Ormond, a fair-minded and capable ruler. Under his guidance Ireland had a rare interval of peace, during which time the land improved both in agriculture and commerce. Belfast and Dublin grew in population and importance, and the manufacture of wool and linen revived. The prohibition of

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trading with the colonies brought about by England's Navigation Acts was not felt much at this time, for Ireland was not yet in a condition to establish much overseas commerce.

Ormond was a Protestant, upholding the supremacy of the Anglican Church, which now asserted its authority above all other Protestant forms of worship, as well as over the Catholics. By the Act of Uniformity, enforcing the Prayer-Book, many Presbyterians were obliged to leave Ulster ; but the Catholics were permitted greater freedom of worship, though not allowed to hold any office in the State. There was only one Irish Catholic victim to the panic aroused in England by the rumour of a vast Catholic plot, caused by the false evidence of Titus Oates. Dr. Plunkett, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, suffered death at Tyburn, though quite innocent of the charge of raising a rebellion. But his was the only death at this time, whereas in England many lost their lives through the wild and unreasonable alarm of the Protestants. Indeed, Ireland remained quiescent, while England at the end of Charles's reign, when it was evident that a Catholic King must succeed to the throne, had become full of unrest. But, as it had happened so often before in Ireland, it was only the calm preceding a storm, a storm that was brief in its duration, but which was to usher in a lengthy period of hopeless misery and degradation for almost five-sixths of the Irish people.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE FALL OF THE STUARTS AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE PENAL CODE

AT last, in 1685, after nearly a century and a half of Protestant rulers, a Catholic King sat upon the throne. It seemed an auspicious moment for Ireland. James II. had it in his power to improve the condition of the Catholics by relaxing little by little the regulations which forbade them from holding offices under the State. But, unfortunately, he handed over the government of Ireland to a man who was much too hot-tempered to do anything in a gradual manner.

Richard Talbot, made Duke of Tyrconnel by James II., his personal friend, entered upon his duties as Lord Deputy in 1687, having previously acted as commander of the army. He was the first Catholic to hold that position since Henry VIII. had thrown over the jurisdiction of the Pope, and he lost no time in showing to the Protestants that a complete change was to be instituted. Catholics were at once admitted wholesale to offices of trust. Catholic judges and magistrates were appointed, and Catholic officers superseded the Protestant ones in the army. Not only that, but Tyrconnel took upon himself to disregard the Act of Settlement, though James II. had declared he would maintain it. The old owners began clamouring for and seizing their lands till the Protestants were in a state of alarm. Many hastened to England, while others took refuge in Ulster, flocking to Enniskillen and Londonderry, two Protestant strongholds. Tyrconnel had made a serious mistake in removing the



*Adrian Stewart.*

THE "PHOENIX" BREAKING THE ROOM AT THE SIEGE OF LONDONDERRY.



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garrison from Londonderry, leaving the Protestants at liberty to declare for William III. when James II. was driven from his throne.

James fled precipitately from his triumphant son-in-law, and was warmly received in France by Louis XIV., glad of any opportunity to annoy his old-time enemy, William of Orange. Provided with French money,



James II. landing at Kinsale.

*From an old print.*

officers, and ammunition, but with no army, James entered Ireland in the spring of 1689. The Irish flocked enthusiastically to his standard, finding in it a rallying-point round which to fight for their country. All the way from Cork to Dublin the people lined the road, welcoming their King with flowers, while Dublin bedecked itself for the royal entry. James found himself at the head of a large army, composed of all the

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Catholics of Ireland, but it was an army lacking in discipline and ill-supplied with arms. The cavalry, formed largely of Irish gentlemen, was the only efficient part which was able to render a good account of itself at the Battle of the Boyne. Though not devotedly attached to the Stuart cause, the Irish were intensely eager to fight under Catholic leaders for their faith and their land, the priests proclaiming it as a holy war.

Money was soon wanting, the French supplies having rapidly evaporated. To meet this want, James issued a base coinage which caused ruin to those who were forced to accept it, and which was of no use for purchasing ammunition from abroad. From the very beginning there were signs of disunion in the army. James and his English followers were only using the Irish as a means to regain England, the French lent aid to embarrass William III., while the Irish themselves would have liked James to remain a king in Ireland.

Soon after his arrival in Dublin, James set off with the army to force the people of Londonderry to open their gates, a task which was expected to be an easy one. Though Lundy, the Governor, had deserted to the enemy, the townsfolk of Derry would hear no word of surrender, and soon were enrolled as defenders of the walls, which were regarded by the assailants with contempt. Seven thousand men were mustered and apportioned their duties, carrying them out with strict obedience. Protestants of English or Scottish blood, they were determined to hold their city against the Popish idolaters, as they regarded the Irish. For nearly three and a half months they held out against over-

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whelming forces and extreme depths of starvation. When an assault had been repulsed James retired, leaving the command to Rosen, a French general, who had recourse to any barbarity in order to reduce the city to submission. A boom was placed across the river and a severe blockade maintained, so that no food was able to reach the besieged, who were reduced to



The Siege of Londonderry.

*From an old print.*

eating horses and dogs and hunting for rats. All provisions were searched for and doled out to the inhabitants.

On June 15 great excitement reigned in the city when ships were discovered in the bay, and a message was obtained saying that they contained the longed-for help from England—soldiers, food, and ammunition. But Kirke, the commander of the little fleet, thought it impossible to relieve Derry, and so drew off, leaving

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the city to its fate. Even then the brave citizens would not give way, though pestilence broke out owing to the bad food, and the men who were left to man the walls had grown haggard and weak. At last, six weeks after they had first seen the relief ships, help came to the despairing city. Owing to a direct command, Kirke made an effort to break the boom across the river. In the words of Lord Macaulay, whose story of the gallant defence can never be surpassed, we read of the eventful evening of July 28 : “The sun had just set ; the evening sermon in the cathedral was over ; and the heart-broken congregation had separated ; when the sentinels on the tower saw the sails of three vessels\* coming up the Foyle. . . . Then the *Mountjoy* took the lead, and went right at the boom. The huge barricade cracked and gave way ; but the shock was such that the *Mountjoy* rebounded and stuck in the mud. A yell of triumph rose from the banks : the Irish rushed to their boats, and were preparing to board ; but the *Dartmouth* poured on them a well-directed broadside, which threw them into disorder. Just then the *Phœnix* dashed at the breach which the *Mountjoy* had made, and was in a moment within the fence. Meantime the tide was rising fast. The *Mountjoy* began to move, and soon passed safe through the broken stakes and floating spars.” Late that evening the starving defenders were indulging in a full meal of beef and flour and pease, and three days later the Irish army were in full retreat.

Meanwhile James had summoned a Parliament to

\* These three vessels were the *Dartmouth*, a small ship-of-war with thirty guns, and two merchantmen, the *Mountjoy* and the *Phœnix*.

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Dublin, which consisted almost entirely of Catholics, many of whom were men of birth and distinction. This Parliament has been denounced by some writers as grossly unjust in its actions, and by others as the only patriotic Parliament that had assembled for centuries. As a matter of fact, it was a fair counterpart of the contemporary Parliaments of England and Scotland. Having power in its hands, it naturally repealed the unfair Act of Settlement and tried to cancel Poynings' Act ; but, though passed by both Houses, James never actually signed the repeal of the latter. Full religious liberty was announced, and a fair adjustment made of Church property between the Catholics and Protestants. So far there is nothing much to complain of their actions, but they proceeded to pass what Mr. Green pronounces to be "the hugest Bill of Attainder the world has seen," on 2,500 absent people, unless they produced themselves on a certain day.

William of Orange had been so occupied in England that, beyond despatching relief to Londonderry, he had done little towards fighting James in Ireland. But in the autumn he sent off the Duke of Schomberg, one of his most tried generals, with a large army. Schomberg, who was getting an old man, did not attempt a forced march upon Dublin, but went into winter-quarters at Dundalk, where his army dwindled rapidly under the fatal influence of the Irish climate. James, reinforced by some 6,000 French troops in exchange for an equal number of Irish soldiers, also remained inactive during the winter.

The following June William arrived in person, commanding an army of 37,000 men, composed of all the various races of Europe. Making no delays, he

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marched from Carrickfergus, where he had landed, towards Dublin, meeting James's army at the River Boyne, about thirty miles north of Dublin. The wide river protected the Irish army in front, but William sent a troop under Schomberg's son to cross a bridge higher up, and so reach the left wing of the enemy. The only retreat for the Irish lay through a narrow pass which, if taken by the enemy, would mean destruction for the whole army.

The French troops were sent to hold this road, removing a steady influence from the untrained Irish infantry, who broke at the attack of the English. But for a time William's forces were held at bay by the Irish cavalry under Richard Hamilton, until their leader was captured and many hundreds of them had fallen. James had taken no part in the battle, upon which his fortunes de-



James II.

pended, and when he saw which way it was going he fled back to Dublin, greeting, so the saying goes, Tyrconnel's wife with, "Madam, your countrymen have run away." "If they have, sire," she replied, "your Majesty seems to have won the race." The next morning the army flocked into Dublin; but, though he could still have made a good stand, James was seized with panic, declared he would never command an Irish army again, and hurried to Waterford, where he took ship for France.

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Though the King for whom they were nominally fighting had cowardly fled from the scene of action, the Irish troops still held out, even in face of William's offer of free pardon to those who would submit. Gathering round Limerick, the Irish, under Patrick Sarsfield, determined to hold the city and redeem their honour. The French commander, who was weary of the war, opposed the attempt, saying angrily that the place was so weak that it could be taken with roasted apples. But, feeble as were its outward defences, the story of its siege shows, as Macaulay points out, what religious and patriotic enthusiasm can do even against apparently hopeless odds. In great disgust the French retreated to Galway, leaving Sarsfield to conduct the siege. Sarsfield stands out as the hero of the war, a man of courage, resource, and honour, "a gentleman," as Macaulay writes, "of eminent merit, brave, upright, honourable, careful of his men in quarters, and certain to be always found at their head in the day of battle." Having done his utmost to provision the city and to repair its defences, Sarsfield was ready for William, who arrived in the middle of August. By good fortune Sarsfield heard of the expected arrival of a train of siege-guns to join William's army. Getting secretly out of the town, Sarsfield succeeded in intercepting and defeating this convoy, blowing up their guns, and returning safely to Limerick. This gallant deed hindered the siege, but, having repaired two of the damaged guns, William managed to make a breach in the walls, and followed it up by a general assault. But the desperate courage of the defenders drove back the English troops, and autumn coming on, when the rain and the rising river would make the low-lying ground

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a deadly fever-bed, decided William to raise the siege. He himself returned to England, leaving Ginkel in command.

In the summer of 1691 the last battles were fought by the Irish against William's veterans, commanded by Ginkel. St. Ruth, a French general, now lead the Irish, with Sarsfield as his second in command, and, unfortunately, the two men did not agree. Owing to their lack of concord, the English managed to take Athlone and cross the Shannon there, and also to inflict a crushing defeat at Aughrim in Galway, where St. Ruth was killed. The last episode of the war took place at Limerick, which underwent a second siege. The approach of autumn made Ginkel open to terms, and Sarsfield was ready to negotiate while he was still at the head of an army. The Treaty of Limerick was signed by the two generals and the Lords Justices. According to its terms, the Irish army was to retire with full honours and with permission to enlist in foreign service. A limited toleration secured for the Catholics "such privileges in the exercise of their religion as were consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II." ; also the inhabitants of Limerick, the officers and soldiers of the Irish army in five particular counties, and all "*persons under their protection* in the said counties," were to receive full pardon and the retention of their estates. The vast majority of the Irish soldiers enlisted in the French army, their departure from their native country being the occasion of heartrending scenes when they said farewell to their mothers and wives and children. Through intention or error, the words in italics of the treaty were left out, and, though King William



THE FLIGHT OF JAMES II.  
After the Battle of the Boyne.

Allan Stewart.



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declared that it was a mistake, the Protestant Irish Parliament refused to accord this favour to Irish land-owners, whom they regarded as a conquered enemy, and their land as legitimate booty.

Convinced by the brief reign of the Catholics in 1689 that it was not safe to admit them to any power, the Parliament proceeded to pass a series of laws calculated to crush and degrade most of the inhabitants of the country. Catholic landowners now retained only one-eighth of the land of Ireland, and, in order to prevent their obtaining any further hold, no Irish Catholic was allowed to purchase land, but only to hold a short leasehold. With the idea of breaking up the estates, a Catholic father had to portion out his property among his various children. Not only that, but if the eldest son proclaimed himself a Protestant, he obtained the entire property, an encouragement to family dissensions. Should a wife or younger child desert the Catholic faith, they could at once claim a separate share of the parental estates and an entire freedom from parental control. Deprived of all share in the government of the country, no longer being allowed to sit in Parliament or to exercise a vote, the Catholics were also unable to enter the army or navy, to become magistrates or barristers, or to sit on juries. Catholic orphans had to be brought up by Protestant guardians, and there were no schools in which a Catholic child could be educated. No Catholic could wear any weapon or possess a horse of a greater value than £5. Intermarriage between Catholic and Protestant was rendered almost impossible. It seems to have been thought that by this method of treatment —the humiliation of a whole nation—the Catholics

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would either disappear or become Protestant. The Catholic Church services were not entirely forbidden, but none of the higher dignitaries of the Church were allowed to live in Ireland, and the village priests were obliged to register themselves and to take an oath impossible for any Catholic. Is it any wonder that Edmund Burke should write of this code of penal laws as “a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man”?

As a natural consequence of this legislation, “the most complete code of persecution that ingenious bigotry ever compiled,” Ireland suffered in prosperity. The Catholic gentry, outcast from all social duties and pleasures, sank into lethargy and sloth, having no natural outlet for their energies; while the Catholic peasantry were in a condition bordering on famine, ground down by the Protestant middlemen who managed the estates of the absentee owners. The Protestant minority suffered from the poverty of the Catholics, whom they treated with harshness and insolence. It seems almost incredible that, at a time removed by more than a century from the fighting period of Protestantism, the Irish Protestants should have disgraced themselves by such a mean and despicable code of laws, spoken of by Lord Macartney, Irish Secretary in 1769, as “the harsh dictates of persecution, not the calm suggestion of reason and policy.” No doubt Macartney was right when he suggested that the operative cause of the persecution was the desire to maintain the lands of the Catholics,

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only possible when they were rendered politically and socially impotent.

One happy result only came about from the Penal Code, and that was unforeseen. The Catholic Church rose triumphant through its hour of trial. Its priests, often only ignorant men drawn from the upper classes of the peasantry, were so full of fervent piety, and lived such virtuous lives of devoted service, that they won the glorious crown of a people reclaimed from vice. Ireland stands high to-day as one of the purest-living nations of Europe.

When the seventeenth century drew to its close Ireland was a thoroughly conquered country, and for nearly a hundred years there was no stirring among the people. But the foundations of the peace had not been well and truly laid.

## CHAPTER VI

### IRELAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE eighteenth century in Ireland is the story of the rule of the "English Garrison," the name given to the dominant English, that "race of men alien in nationality, hostile in faith, opposite in sentiment, to the people beneath them," as Sir William Butler describes them, who crushed into submission the Irish nation. Each English statesman in succession carried on the policy of civilizing Ireland by means of the English colony; but at the same time they treated that colony selfishly, regardless of its interests when they clashed with those of England. Though the ascendant party in Ireland, the Protestants had their own disabilities and grievances. They were restricted in trade by the narrow jealousy

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of England, who had in the reign of Charles II. forbidden the introduction of live cattle into England, and then, when the Irish farmers had turned their fields into pasture for sheep in order to sell the wool to France and other Continental countries, sternly prohibited the export of wool to any other country but England. This brought ruin, for the manufacturers who had started mills had to shut them down and return to England.

Protestants filled the Irish Parliament, which was quite powerless during the first half of the century, being completely under the control of the English Privy Council. As the hereditary revenue was sufficient to carry on the government, it was not necessary to apply to Parliament for money, so that it had no voice in the expenditure.

Though oblivious of the wrongs of the Catholics, who, silent and impotent under their ruthless persecution, seem almost to pass out of history during the early years of the century, the Protestants raised an outcry against their own grievances. A certain William Molyneux, just before the seventeenth century closed, had written an able book against England's method of treating Ireland, thrusting upon her laws passed in England without her consent. This book was honoured by being consigned to the common hangman to be burnt. Twenty-five years later, Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick, took up the cudgels for Ireland ; not that he loved the Irish, "but, fortunately for Ireland," as Mr. Dunlop tells us, "he hated the Whigs," then in power in England. Though born in Ireland, Swift was an Englishman who never grew to love the land of his birth, where a cruel fate, as he

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considered it, condemned him to live. But he loved using his sharp ironic pen against the follies of mankind, and the Whig Government in particular, and when the opportunity came he fought for the Irish, though he had no real sympathy for the cause of Ireland. The opportunity which dressed Swift in the outward clothes of an Irish patriot was the need of a copper coinage. Without reference to the Irish Parliament, the English Government issued a patent to the Duchess of Kendal, one of George II.'s mistresses, who handed over her rights to William Wood, an English iron-founder, for £10,000. So small was the total amount of currency in Ireland, owing to the drainage of rents to absentee landlords, that the amount of copper coinage granted by the patent would have swamped all other currency, a dangerous economic expedient. The coins themselves were good, being guaranteed by Sir Isaac Newton, then Master of the Mint. Swift wrote letters as if proceeding from a Dublin tradesman, signing them "M. B. Drapier," urging the Irish people to refuse these coins, which he assumed to be base, and succeeded in rousing such great indignation in Ireland that the Government were forced to give way and withdraw the patent. This incident is memorable, being one of the few occasions when Irish public opinion, unassisted by resource to arms, has weighed with the English Government.

As the century went on, the Penal Code was less



Dean Swift.

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rigorously enforced, though no single part of it was repealed. When Lord Chesterfield was Viceroy in 1745, he allowed considerable freedom to the Catholics, whose priests were no longer hunted and whose chapels were opened. Though unable to abolish the inhuman laws, Chesterfield used his influence to disregard them, having come, as he said, "to proscribe no set of persons whatever." This wise policy was too broad for the time, and Lord Chesterfield was soon recalled ; but the spirit of religious indifference spreading over the Continent gradually influenced Ireland, making religious animosity less bitter.

Ireland failed to rise for the Stuarts in 1715 or 1745, when Scotland was aflame with Jacobite enthusiasm, and this time of peace assisted in the material prosperity of the country, the upper classes being able to erect those large eighteenth-century mansions which still adorn the landscape. The wealth which peace brought to the land was not shared by the poor. Ground down by taxation, tithes, high rents, and finally pushed to desperation by the wholesale enclosure of common lands, the peasantry formed themselves into an association which was beyond the power of the law. Known as the "Whiteboys," from their custom of wearing shirts as a disguise over their clothes, these men, finding that the law would give them no redress, took the law into their own hands, punished obnoxious landlords and middlemen, and issued rates of rents and wages which were enforced by terror. The Whiteboys indulged in unspeakable cruelties, descending to torturing their victims, cutting off ears and noses ; and so widespread was the organization that no evidence could be obtained to convict the law-breaker.

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The Parliament meeting in Dublin, entirely shackled by England, took no steps to improve the condition of the poor, the members merely seeking rich posts and jobs for themselves. A certain section of the Irish aristocracy, who obtained the name of "Undertakers," carried out the wishes of the Viceroy and the English in authority in the Castle, agreeing to keep Parliament quiet and acquiescent, provided they obtained all the patronage and lucrative positions to distribute among themselves and their friends. It is claimed by some apologists that these Undertakers, while notoriously corrupt, were yet Irish in birth and sentiment, having more consideration for their country than any Englishman would have. They carried into effect some useful public works, partly, it is said, to use up the surplus in the Treasury, and thus to necessitate the calling in of Parliamentary supplies, making the votes of members worth buying. When George III. became King in 1760, he brought about a change of policy concerning Ireland, for he was determined to play the part of King, and not merely to look on. Viceroys were to be resident in Ireland, not brief visitors as hitherto, and the power of the Undertakers was to be crushed in the interests of the Crown. Lord Townshend came over in 1767 as the first of this new order of Viceroys. He had no experience in political life, having up till then been a distinguished soldier, fighting on the Continent and under Wolfe in Canada. When Wolfe fell on the Heights of Abraham, Townshend had taken command, and when he came home he claimed "more than his share of the honours of victory." His conduct in Ireland shows him to have been vain, loving popularity, jovial when not crossed, and with considerable ability,

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but lacking as a tactful administrator. He was ill-fitted to perform the difficult task of removing power from the Undertakers, the dominant aristocratic class, in order to transfer it to the representative of the Crown. According to Mr. J. R. Fisher, whose recent book, "The End of the Irish Parliament," should be studied by all interested in Irish affairs, the members of the Irish Parliament were at this time not really patriotic : "that they should have the right to divide the spoils of Irish politics without the interference of England—therein consisted the patriotism of the Irish Parliament." Yet Townshend's methods were in no way preferable to the corrupt jobbery of the Undertakers. It was merely a transference from one set of men to another. At first Townshend was popular, for he obtained the Octennial Act, granting a new Parliament every eight years ; but when the Parliament became troublesome over the question of Money Bills and their right to originate them, he dissolved Parliament. In the interval he proceeded to use all forms of patronage in the various professions and the Church, to distribute lavish peerages and pensions, with the one aim of buying a Government majority. Naturally enough, he was cordially detested by the fallen Undertakers, and his post was made so uncomfortable by abuse and calumny that he must have been grateful to be recalled after five years' experience of Irish rule.

An example occurred during the reign of the succeeding Viceroy, Lord Harcourt, of the galling interference of England, and the narrow spirit with which she regarded the sister country. A Bill to tax absentee landlords two shillings in the pound, admitted by Harcourt to be eminently just, was proposed in the

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Irish Parliament. It was received with great favour in Ireland, and Chatham, then Prime Minister of England, also supported it, but owing to the furious indignation of the absentees the Bill had to be dropped. With moving eloquence some of the great Whig nobles, who were also absentee Irish landlords, announced in their written remonstrance that they were being laid under a partial tax, being penalized in their free choice of residence, going on to say, with touching pathos, that invalids would no longer be able to seek health abroad, or young men be able to obtain the advantages of education.

When the American colonies revolted from England's method of taxing without affording means of representation, the Irish people were much in sympathy with them, though the Irish Parliament voted supplies for the war and despatched nearly all the available troops to assist England. It was then discovered that Ireland lay a defenceless prey for any foreign foe, the English navy being too occupied to guard it. American privateers were hovering round the coast, and the French might descend at any moment. Belfast at this crisis determined to protect herself, and enrolled the citizens as Volunteers. Her example was followed all over Ireland, till 40,000 men, equipped with arms from the Government, stood as a Volunteer army against invasion—"one of those movements of enthusiasm that occur two or three times in the history of a nation," as Lecky describes it. All classes participated in this movement, which was headed by Lord Charlemont, a scholarly, capable man who had travelled considerably in foreign countries, and who was also

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well known to the literary men of London, counting among his friends Dr. Johnson and Horace Walpole.

Two of the leading Colonels of the Volunteers were Henry Flood and Henry Grattan, two men who stand out pre-eminent at this period of Irish history. They had been great friends, both working enthusiastically for the independence of Parliament. After Flood accepted office under the Government, the friends became estranged, Grattan stepping into Flood's position of leader of the Patriot Party. Grattan's main object was to free Irish legislation from England, to give the Irish Parliament the power of passing measures without the permission of the English Privy Council. Though at first helpless to resist the corrupt influences of the Government, Grattan was at length able to realize his dreams. The Volunteers were a force with which to back demands, and, once the fear of an invasion was over, they began to think of the redress of wrongs. The first thing they sought to remove was the restriction upon trade, which was much depressed owing to the war with France. Lord North, the head of the English Government, distraught by the war in America, for which he had been largely responsible, gave way, and granted Ireland permission in 1780 to trade with the colonies and to export wool to the Continent.

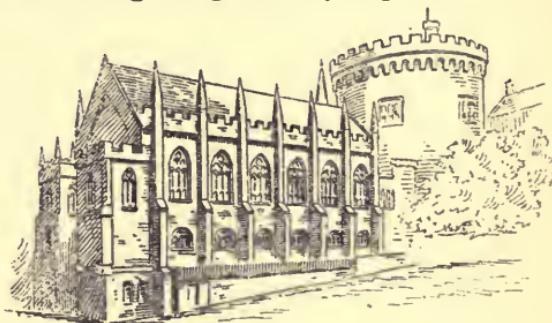
A great step in liberty having been obtained, Grattan, supported by the Volunteers, proceeded to strive for Parliamentary independence. At a Convention held at Dungannon in Tyrone early in 1782, the Volunteers, who were a well-disciplined, orderly, and loyal set of men, set forth their claim for a free Parliament, and Grattan in the House of Commons, in an eloquent

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speech, echoed the demand. The English Government bowed before the inevitable, and withdrew all the laws which made Ireland submissive to English rule, leaving her almost as independent as the Parliament at Westminster. But no sooner had Grattan's life-long desire been granted, and Poynings' Act no longer held Ireland in its grip, than English statesmen began to realize the possible dangers of this freedom. Ireland might, if she so chose, refuse to assist England in her wars, might even open her ports to the enemy, and, moreover, was free to refuse all English goods by a prohibitive tariff.

As a matter of fact, during her brief period of independence the Irish Parliament did none of these things, showing great loyalty to the Crown and acquiescing in English foreign policy.

Of course, the Parliament only represented a very small section of the nation, the majority of which was certainly not conspicuously loyal during the latter years of the century, and might, had it held any part in the Parliament, have realized some of the anticipated dangers. At one moment the awkwardness of the situation was realized, when, in 1788, King George III.'s illness developed into insanity, and a Regent became necessary. Pitt, then in power, was not anxious to choose the Prince of Wales, who would place Fox in authority, but finally prepared to pass a Bill giving the Regency



Dublin Castle.

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to the Prince, coupled with restrictions. It was expected that Ireland would do the same, but Grattan persuaded the Parliament to pass an address, merely requesting the Prince to take upon himself the duties of Regent. The Viceroy refused to submit this address, so a Commission was appointed to convey it personally; but when the Commissioners arrived in London the King had recovered and the crisis was over. "His recovery sealed the fate of the Irish Parliament. . . . The end did not come immediately. The Irish Parliament had still ten years of sickly existence before it. But even in 1789 the Union was a foregone conclusion."\*

Grattan's Parliament, as the Parliament was known after the freedom of 1782, was far removed from a free assembly. Of its 300 members, only one-third was open for free election, the other two-thirds being practically the private property of various peers and patrons, who sold their seats for sometimes as much as £2,000 for the duration of Parliament. No Catholic was allowed to sit in Parliament, or even to vote, and the franchise only admitted the property-owners among the Protestants. While admitting that there were some men of honour in this assembly capable of voting independently, yet it is undoubtedly the fact that the great majority of the members were shamelessly corrupt, selling their votes to the highest bidder. Over such men Grattan's eloquence, after the first fervour of freedom had died down, could not prevail, and his efforts at further reform were unsuccessful.

Pitt made one great effort to assist Ireland, which was still suffering from commercial depression, when he

\* Robert Dunlop, "Cambridge Modern History."

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proposed in 1785 a complete freedom of trade between England and Ireland. The only stipulation was that any surplus in the hereditary revenue, above a certain fixed sum, should be used for the British navy, "devoted," as Pitt put it, "to our common safety." The scheme was adopted in the Irish Parliament, but in England the manufacturers raised their cry of ruin ; and being supported by Fox, who acted entirely from a party spirit, the proposals were so altered that the Irish Parliament threw them out. Irish trade, however, owing to greater freedom, began to look up gradually, and prosperity during the remaining years of the century began to smile upon the country. A protective Corn Law was passed in Ireland, imposing duties upon imported corn, but granting a bounty upon all that was exported. This measure is said to have changed the face of Ireland, converting the land from pasture into arable, and causing wages to rise. England's energies being now devoted to manufactures, she was a good market for Irish corn ; but this rapid improvement was not a permanent one, for Ireland is not intended by nature for a corn-growing country. By 1790 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Parnell, stated that "it was his pride and his happiness to declare that he did not think it possible for any nation to have improved more in her circumstances since 1784 . . . than Ireland had done." To the casual observer Ireland seemed at last on the right road to prosperity —a Penny Post had been started in Dublin, where a National Bank also was founded, and a College of Physicians. But though the finances were satisfactory, the corruption of Parliament and its refusal to emancipate the Catholics or to remove the tithes which

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oppressed the poorer classes of the nation, brought about the disaster of 1798, and the subsequent legislative union with England.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE REBELLION OF 1798 AND THE ACT OF UNION

THE revolt of the American Colonies had been the unforeseen means by which the Irish Parliament had obtained its freedom. A few years later the French Revolution led to the Rebellion of 1798, for it may safely be argued that had no help been anticipated from France, the Irish, however urgent their wrongs, would never have risen. At first, the crushing of royal and aristocratic tyranny in France was greeted with enthusiasm by nearly everyone in Ireland, till the later excesses of the Republican government alienated the sympathies of the upper classes and the clergy. Republican ideas began to spread among the manufacturing and agricultural classes, being eagerly welcomed by the Presbyterians in the north, who suffered from the dominance of the Anglican party in power, having to pay tithes to a Church of which they did not approve. The lower classes of the Catholics also felt the influence of the new ideas, and were buoyed up with the hope of getting full religious freedom.

Seizing the opportunity to combine the various religious elements in Ireland, a young lawyer named Theobald Wolfe Tone founded a society called "The United Irishmen," whose object was to obtain Parliamentary reform and emancipation for the Catholics. Though conceived and led by Protestants, the society



HENRY GRATTAN, P.C.

*From the Painting by Francis Wheatley, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery, London.*

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was soon joined by many Catholics, becoming a vast organization and a real menace to the English Government. Wolfe Tone was undoubtedly filled with Republican ideals from the outset, but the original United Irishmen were loyal, and desirous of obtaining their wished-for reforms by constitutional means.



Theobald Wolfe Tone, Founder of the "United Irishmen."

One part of the wishes of the United Irishmen was obtained in 1793 when the Catholic Relief Act was passed, removing most of the disabilities under which the Catholics had suffered during the past century, and admitting them to the franchise but not to a seat in Parliament. This gave a vote to the ignorant peasant, who was then free to assist

his Protestant landlord to become a member of the House of Commons, from which the Catholic gentry were debarred. The Act was supported by the Government, Pitt thinking it wise to pacify the Catholics while he was carrying on war with France. Grattan and his party also assisted the Bill, being in favour of such limited enfranchisement which still retained the Protestant ascendancy. The great opponent of reform of every kind, in or outside Parliament, was Lord Fitzgibbon, who had risen through his legal talents to a high position, becoming Chancellor in 1790. Though honourable himself, he encouraged the retention of every form of Parliamentary corruption.

On January 4, 1795, Lord Fitzwilliam arrived in Dublin to take up his duties as Lord Lieutenant, his Viceroyalty, though extremely brief in duration,

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proving a very memorable one. Great differences of opinion exist concerning the correctness and wisdom of Lord Fitzwilliam's government. The new Viceroy seems to have come with the idea that he had liberty to carry out what was right in his own judgment, and not to accept without criticism the dictates of the English Privy Council. Pitt declared that he had expressly informed Fitzwilliam that he was not to alter the Irish system of government, nor to dismiss any servants of the Government, and that with regard to Catholic Emancipation he was to seek every means to stop the movement, but if it were too strong, not to oppose it. Two days after his arrival Lord Fitzwilliam dismissed John Beresford from his office, a man of no great ability, but one who had immense parliamentary influence and was a great friend of the Government. Meanwhile, all over Ireland the Catholics were clamouring for complete equality with the Protestants, impressing the Viceroy with the impossibility of keeping them any longer in subjection. He wrote urgent letters to England, getting no answers for a long time, and was finally recalled at the end of February, Pitt being indignant at the utter disregard of his instructions. Lecky maintains that Fitzwilliam did not deserve censure, and that he had not overstepped his unwritten instructions. Fitzwilliam had roused the hopes of the Catholics to a great height, so that the day of his departure was observed as one of mourning. The Protestant House of Commons, too, had presented an address, saying he had "merited the thanks of this House and the confidence of the people." That Fitzwilliam had been tactless and hasty and had not fulfilled Pitt's terms seems proved by the fact that

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his friends in the Cabinet, those who had urged his appointment, acquiesced in his recall, that "fatal turning-point in Irish history." Mr. Lecky insists that "from the day when Pitt recalled Lord Fitzwilliam the course of her history was changed. Intense and growing hatred of England, revived religious and class animosities, a savage rebellion savagely repressed, a legislative union prematurely and corruptly carried, mark the closing years of the eighteenth century."

Left to the inefficient care of Lord Camden, the new Viceroy, the country moved rapidly towards rebellion, all hope of removing wrongs by constitutional means being given up. In the autumn of 1795 the Orange Society was started, a body of Protestants in direct opposition to the Catholics and United Irishmen. It began in the north, where a feud had always existed between Protestants and Catholics, an ill-feeling which constantly burst into open conflict, neither party being innocent of blame. The Orangemen bound themselves together for defensive purposes, at the same time declaring their loyalty and determination to observe the laws. But, unfortunately, a lawless element gained the upper hand and carried on a fierce persecution of the Catholics of Ulster, driving innocent and harmless people to "hell or Connaught," as the saying was. The homeless peasants, when they reached Connaught, preached rebellion "by merely recounting their wrongs."

Wolfe Tone, who had been obliged to leave Ireland, his treasonable practices having been discovered, had been in France urging the Republican government to assist his country. He impressed them so much that a fleet was fitted out to carry a large force of men to Ireland, under the command of General Hoche, an

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officer held in high estimation. Bad luck attended the expedition, as with all French attempts upon Ireland. Sailing from Brest in December, 1796, the fleet encountered severe storms, and became separated. Hoche never reached Ireland, and though Grouchy, the second in command, managed to get into Bantry Bay, he hesitated to land, till another gale forced him out to sea again. It is scarcely to be wondered that Wolfe Tone, who had accompanied the expedition, felt his hopes crushed, when the vessels containing the 15,000 men headed again for France without having struck a blow for Ireland's freedom. He writes in his diary: "So, all is over! It is hard after having forced my way thus far to be obliged to turn back." England had been saved again, not by her superior foresight or strength, but by the stormy winds, which have so often protected her shores.

The men in power at the Castle, headed by Fitzgibbon, the Chancellor, were fully alive to the danger, and determined to draw out the sting of the rebellion before it had actually begun work. The rebel leaders, well known to the Government through the treachery of spies, were seized, and atrocious methods resorted to in order to obtain hidden arms. Though the United Irishmen numbered hundreds of thousands upon paper, they were lacking in all forms of discipline, and once their leaders were gone their doom was inevitable. The Government used the yeomanry, all Orangemen burning with religious animosity, to search for arms and put down all resistance, and thus connived at barbarous cruelties which would never have been permitted by English soldiers. One English General resigned when he found what disorderly ruffians he was

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to command, but General Lake, who took his place, had no such compunction. The leader of the United Irishmen, who was to command the rebellion, was Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a younger son of the Duke of Leinster, who had previously held a commission in the English army, but who had now thrown himself enthusiastically into the United Irishmen. His hiding-place in Dublin being betrayed, Fitzgerald fought desperately with his captors, knowing that no mercy would be shown to a rebel leader, but was finally secured after he had wounded some of his assailants. He died from his wounds shortly after in prison.

In May, 1798, the smouldering rebellion at last burst into flame, fanned, it is said by some historians, by Lord Fitzgibbon (now become the Earl of Clare), who wished to obtain a full opportunity of suppressing with the utmost force every suspected rebel. From the outset it had no chance. It was leaderless and without unity. The Protestants in the North did not support the Catholics in the South, Wolfe Tone's ideal of United Irishmen vanishing like a dream. But, hopeless as it was, it was savage beyond description, both sides indulging in horrible atrocities. The Catholic peasantry of Wicklow and Wexford, led by Father Murphy, for a few brief weeks had some success, but their rising was quelled regardless of mercy or the decent humanities of warfare. Another French expedition landed in Mayo, but was forced to surrender after a preliminary success at Castlebar. Wolfe Tone once more reached Ireland in yet another French attempt and was captured, being recognized by a one-time friend. He escaped death on the gallows by committing suicide in prison, and with him died

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Ireland's most capable and whole-hearted, though mistaken friend. Had Hoche's expedition been successful, and the Irish risen and driven out the English, Tone would only have found his much-loved country handed over to serve the ambitions of Napoleon, to fall again, doubtless, to England when the Bourbons returned to the throne of France.

When Lord Cornwallis became Viceroy, he did his utmost to restrain the yeomanry and to see justice done to the unhappy rebels, who continued for some little time to maintain a kind of guerilla warfare among the hills. The great rebellion which had simmered for so long in the minds of the enthusiastic but not very practical leaders of the United Irishmen, had come and gone, leaving the cause of Ireland's freedom and happiness more hopeless than before. Instead of being the combined resistance of a united nation, it had resolved itself into little petty risings, unconnected with one another. Protestant and Catholic, who had been on the verge of toleration, grew to hate one another again ; the Rebellion had left, as one recent writer tells us, "a legacy of blighted hopes and most evil memories." Those who study Irish history will feel inclined to agree with the defence which Lord Macaulay has pleaded for the evil of rebellion, though his words were not written for Ireland. He writes : "We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. . . . The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people ; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live."

The events of 1798 determined Pitt upon a course

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of action which had long been developing in his mind. In his judgment it was too dangerous to allow the freedom of the Irish Parliament, attained through Grattan in 1782, to remain. Both the Regency question and the war with France had shown how unworkable was the Constitution so lauded by Grattan. Pitt was anxious to give complete emancipation to the Catholics, but this could no longer be done safely in Ireland, where religious animosity was revived, and where the Catholics, once sitting in Parliament, would outvote the Protestants. But if Irish members sat at Westminster, this danger would be averted.

Cromwell, in his supreme, autocratic method, had carried out Pitt's scheme with great simplicity, just closing the Dublin Parliament and ordering a certain number of representatives to Westminster. But this had not lasted long, and the blessings of Parliament had been restored to Dublin with Charles II. In 1698, however, we find William Molyneux writing concerning the union of the English and Irish Parliaments, adding, "but this is a happiness we can hardly hope for." And when the Parliaments of Scotland and England were united in 1707, the Irish House of Commons petitioned for a similar union, which unfortunately was not granted.

Lord Castlereagh, the chief secretary of Cornwallis, brought forward the legislative union early in 1799, but owing to the strong opposition it received, the measure was dropped. The English Parliament, however, had passed resolutions in favour of the union, and Pitt ordered Cornwallis to see that it was carried in Ireland. Dublin was against the Union because of loss of trade and prestige when Parliament was removed;

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the lawyers also disliked the supremacy of the English Bar ; but the Catholic hierarchy was in favour, hoping for religious equality which was vaguely promised by Cornwallis ; and the borough owners and many members were willing to be bought. Castlereagh made no trouble about the obtaining of the necessary majority. The House of Commons had always been corrupt, the passing of Government measures regularly paid for, so he merely curtly decided to “buy out and secure to the Crown for ever the fee simple of Irish corruption.” And this he proceeded to do. Borough-owners were to be compensated by the market value of their boroughs, peerages and places were lavishly bestowed, till enough votes were obtained. Castlereagh has been “execrated for a century with a uniformity of unalloyed obloquy,” as Mr. Litton Falkiner tells us, yet he only did what others had done before him ; and Grattan himself declared when he was dying, “Don’t be hard on Castlereagh ; he loves his country.” The question all rests upon whether a union was necessary and desirable, for, if necessary, it is difficult to know how else it could have been obtained. Neither Pitt nor Castlereagh were actuated by vindictive feelings towards Ireland, but seem to have sincerely thought that the union would be advantageous for both England and Ireland. Lord Cornwallis assisted in securing the union, though he wrote : “I despise and hate myself every hour for engaging in such dirty work.”

The Act of Union came into effect in January, 1801, in spite of the strenuous opposition of those who were sincerely opposed to it, and those to whose interest it was to retain a separate Parliament. Grattan, enfeebled with illness, came to the House dressed in the old

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Volunteer uniform, and in an eloquent speech pleaded with Parliament to retain its liberty ; but the members had been securely bought, and eloquence was in vain. Besides, the Irish Parliament had neglected to fulfil its obvious duties. It ought to have recognized and settled the Catholic question long before the rebellion, and to have done away with the obnoxious tithes. As Mr. Dunlop writes : "The boasted independence of the Irish Parliament had proved a sham. Its corruption was past dispute. It had refused to reform itself when the opportunity offered, and it was itself mainly responsible for its own fate."

Though Pitt had not actually promised emancipation to the Catholics, he had held out considerable hopes, and so secured their help towards the passing of the Act of Union, and now that the Union was obtained, he tried to pass an Emancipation Bill. But King George III. would not hear of it, being afraid, owing to a suggestion that had come to him from Fitzgibbon, that he would violate his coronation oath in freeing the Catholics, and so endanger his throne. Pitt resigned office, but was again at the head of affairs three years later, having relinquished the Catholic claims. For this he has been much blamed, many insisting that he could have forced the obstinate old King to give way.

In Ireland at first there was no great disturbance over the Union, more or less of indifference being displayed, with a growing sense in the towns that a time of prosperity might be at hand. But in 1803 there was another rising, doomed from the outset to failure and ignominy. Its leader was Robert Emmet, a young man of some ability, inspired with a romantic love of his country. He tried to obtain French help, but

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did not wait for it, gathering men secretly in Dublin with the wild idea of capturing the Castle, and once in possession to let the rebellion spread over the country. His own fortune was expended upon the purchase of arms and ammunition, but when the fatal day of July 23 came, the whole scheme proved a miserable failure. Emmet tried to lead the rebels towards the Castle, but his men had no discipline, and ran about in disorder, attacking what they liked. Lord Kilwarden, an Irish judge distinguished for his impartial justice, was murdered by the mob, whom Emmet could not restrain, but when the soldiers came upon the scene, the insurgents disappeared without making any attempt at fighting. Emmet himself escaped to the Wicklow Mountains, from whence he might safely have reached France, had not his passionate love for Sarah Curran dragged him back to Dublin for one last farewell. Captured on this visit, the unfortunate young man was hastily tried and hanged. Before his death Emmet ordered that no epitaph should be written concerning him till his country had taken her place among the nations of the earth.

More than a hundred years have passed away since the rebellion of 1798, but it has not been forgotten, and its influence has affected the government of the country. "Time has scarcely served to soften a single animosity," writes Mr. Litton Falkiner, "or to obliterate the marks of racial and religious hate which the disorders of the rebellion traced afresh in Ireland. In the popular imagination the long procession of a hundred years has only served to tinge with the romance of history the figures of the chief actors in a struggle which, hopeless as were its objects, bloody as

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was its progress, and mournful its conclusion, is still regarded with a certain enthusiasm of patriotic reverence as a central and inspiring episode in the drama of Irish history."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DURING the first fifteen years after the Union Ireland made some strides in prosperity, trade began to increase, Belfast in particular becoming a town of importance. Dislike of the Union had died down, even Grattan, its great opponent, consenting to sit in the Parliament at Westminster. But with the fall of Napoleon at Waterloo, this prosperity fell, too.

The war with France had made Irish corn much wanted, the Irish farmers converting a considerable portion of their pasture into cornfields to meet the demand. The peasant population found ample work, and increased enormously in consequence, so that when prices suddenly fell, starvation faced the labourers who were thrown out of work. In spite of private and public charity the poor suffered terribly from famine, and were turned in thousands from their homes.

In 1820, Henry Grattan, whose memory is cherished in Ireland on account of his devotion to her cause, died in London, whither he had gone to speak in favour of Catholic Emancipation. The following year Ireland welcomed with enthusiasm George IV., who made a state visit to Dublin. It was undoubtedly a memorable occasion, being the first time that her King had visited the country unaccompanied by an army. Unfortunately, George IV. was quite unworthy of a

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cordial welcome, being, apart from his personal character, one of the main causes of hindrance to complete Catholic Emancipation.

It was not until the "Liberator," Daniel O'Connell, appeared as their champion, that the Catholics obtained their undoubted rights. Himself a Catholic, O'Connell

gave up a great career at the Bar to rouse the Irish people for the causes of Emancipation and the Repeal of the Union. He was a man of great physique, with a strong melodious voice, which carried all over the vast audiences that he used to address. During his education in France he had seen something of the horrors of the French Revolution, a sight which had so impressed him that all through the agitation which he conducted he persistently refused to use



Daniel O'Connell.

force of arms. "Shed not a drop of blood, it will only help the enemy," he used to say. In 1823 he formed the Catholic Association, into which the priests flocked, whose aim was to carry Emancipation. By means of penny subscriptions from the Catholic peasants a large sum of money, known as the "Catholic Rent," was collected, to be used for the purposes of the agitation.

Five years after the formation of the Association O'Connell stood as candidate at an election in Clare. The priests used their influence on the tenantry, who returned O'Connell with an immense majority. When the new member for Clare appeared at the table of the

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House of Commons, he refused to take the oath by which he would have disowned the Catholic faith, and was consequently ordered to withdraw. A fresh election took place, and O'Connell was again chosen as representative.

At last the English Government gave way, and under Wellington and Peel removed the last remaining Catholic disabilities, allowing them to sit in Parliament (the oath being altered) and to occupy every office except that of Lord Lieutenant and Lord Chancellor. O'Connell, having gone through a third election, was finally permitted to take his seat for Clare. One of his great objects being now attained, he turned his attention to the second, the Repeal of the Union, for which he formed another association, gaining a following of Irish members in the House of Commons. When the question was defeated in 1834, O'Connell for some years remained passive on the subject, giving support to the Whig Government under Melbourne. Some more Irish grievances were removed by Melbourne's Government, the most pressing being the tithes, which were in 1838 altered to a rent charge, the landlord being responsible. The Catholic peasant was no longer forced to support a Church which he hated. The same year a Poor Law was given to Ireland, based upon the one existing in England.

When Peel came into office in 1841, O'Connell, who disliked the Prime Minister, and had once fought a duel with him, went into furious opposition, creating a fever of excitement in Ireland by his fiery eloquence. Gigantic open-air meetings were held, alarming to any Government, which at last forbade the one which was to assemble at Clontarf. O'Connell, true to his hatred

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of bloodshed, abandoned the meeting, and with it lost his hold upon the people. He was found guilty on a charge of conspiracy, but was acquitted by the House of Lords. Broken down in health and spirits, O'Connell died in 1847 on his way to Rome.

In the two years before he died O'Connell had witnessed a time of awful misery in his much-loved land. A large proportion of the population subsisted on the potatoes which they grew upon their one-acre plots of ground, maintaining a bare livelihood. It was obvious to anyone that should the potato crop fail, starvation must ensue. A terrible blight attacked the potatoes in the late summer of 1845, in which the potatoes perished. Much distress followed, but owing to good crops of wheat, barley, and oats, the results were not so appalling as during the succeeding winter. Potatoes were again planted in 1846, and seemed to promise well, but early in August the disease fell upon the blooming plants, turning them into "one wide waste of putrifying vegetation." Despair seized the unfortunate people, who were deprived by this blow of any hope of food. The new workhouses were quite unable to house the destitute peasants, who after selling all their scanty belongings, merely lay down in their cabins or on the wayside, and died in thousands. Private people in England and abroad were moved by the tale of ghastly suffering, and poured money into Ireland to buy food, and the Government did its best to cope with the disaster. Unfortunately, they were hampered by ideas of interfering with trade, and so projected relief works which were of no value—roads being made to lead to the heart of bogs—and, moreover, insisted that before relief could be given,

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the farmer must part with all but a minute portion of land. Many of the people were too feeble to work, and the death list grew appallingly. During March and April of 1847, over 2,500 died every week in the workhouses alone. Thousands crowded on the emigrant ships, many hundreds dying on board, all leaving the home of their birth, filled with a spirit of bitter hatred of England, who had allowed them to suffer and die. Gaunt, hunger-stricken men were not likely to forget the scene repeated all over the south and west of Ireland, of cabins filled with the dead and living, the latter too weak to bury their dead.

Fired by the horrors of the famine another abortive rising took place in 1848, led by some enthusiastic young men who had no great following in the country. The Catholic peasantry did not support them, and the petty rebellion was soon crushed, the leaders being sentenced to transportation for life.

About the same time an Act had been passed dealing with Irish land, called the Encumbered Estates Act, whereby the sale of heavily mortgaged estates could be enforced. Many old families were ruined in this way, having to part with ancestral estates. Sir Robert Peel, the author of the Act, hoped to get the land into the hands of capable English owners who would make it profitable, but like the good intentions of so many English statesmen, his hopes were not fulfilled. Very few Englishmen bought the estates which soon flooded the market, the chief purchasers being small Irish speculators who were anxious to make a good bargain, and who therefore raised rents and evicted those tenants who would not pay.

The evicted tenants flocked in thousands to the

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United States, the population dropping steadily. Before the famine there had been more than eight millions of people in Ireland, but in 1865 there were only just over five millions. Relieved of so many dependent upon its soil, the country seemed to improve, wages became higher, and rents lower ; indeed, the general opinion in England was that Ireland would succeed as steadily as her population decreased. But those Irish who had found new homes in America had not forgotten Ireland. After the conclusion of the war between the Northern and Southern States concerning the question of slavery in 1861, many of the Irish who had taken part in the struggle wished to carry on their warlike energies to assist Ireland. They formed a society, known as the Fenians, which collected money, despatched agents to Ireland to rouse the people, and prepared for a formal descent upon the country. The Irish peasants, however, were not ready to rise, their priests refused assistance, and when the Irish-American contingent arrived in 1867, they found the nation unresponsive. The Irish Constabulary, formed by Peel when Chief Secretary, was sufficient to put down the rising without any bloodshed. However, some Fenian outbreaks in England, particularly the attack upon a police van in Manchester containing some Fenian prisoners, resulting in the death of a policeman, and ultimately in the execution of three of the assailants, roused English interest in Irish affairs, and prompted the feeling that Ireland deserved better treatment.

In 1868 Mr. William Ewart Gladstone became Prime Minister, and being much influenced by the Fenian insurrection, prepared to attend to the needs of Ireland—to disestablish the Irish Church, to reform the

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Irish land system, and to provide higher education for the Catholics. The following year, in spite of being denounced as a traitor to his Queen, his country, and his God, Mr. Gladstone succeeded in disestablishing the Irish Church, which has much benefited from its freedom from the State. Ample provision was made for the Church, which retained all the sacred buildings, and compensation was awarded to all who had any claims. Though not pressing heavily upon the people since the abolition of the tithes, yet the position of the State Church being held by one not acknowledged by four-fifths of the nation was both absurd and annoying. The Anglican Church being placed upon an equality with the Catholic and Presbyterian was an undoubted good.

Mr. Gladstone next attacked the Irish land question. Irish tenants suffered from many disabilities, the most pressing being the difficulty of obtaining a long lease, and the lack of compensation for improvements. After reclaiming a farm from almost the condition of bog-land, the tenant was liable to be turned out of his farm without any return for his labour. Peel had tried to pass a law giving compensation for improvements, but the landowners, being generally of Lord Palmerston's opinion, that "tenant's right is landlord's wrong," had prevented its passing. Mr. Gladstone's Bill of 1870 gave compensation to tenants for all improvements, prevented eviction of any tenant who paid a Government valuation rent, and helped tenants to purchase their farms by Government loans. This was a great step towards the fair administration of the Irish land system.

The agitation for the Repeal of the Union had dropped with O'Connell's death, but in 1873 a modified

## Ireland

form of repeal was asked for by the Home Rule party led by Mr. Isaac Butt. Mr. Butt, a clever Protestant lawyer, demanded an Irish Parliament to conduct its own local affairs, with representatives in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster to vote on Imperial matters. Many Irish Members were returned as Home Rulers after the election of 1874, and for some years insisted upon having a night every Session devoted to the question of Home Rule; but nothing more happened till shortly before the death of Mr. Butt, the leadership of the party was transferred to Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell.

Parnell was the great-grandson of Sir John Parnell, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer during the last years of the Irish Parliament. From the first he led his party with great skill, keeping it well under his control. He gave up Mr. Butt's methods, and resorted to every form of Parliamentary obstruction, in order to force one of the great political parties to grant Home Rule to Ireland. An Irish National Land League was started with the idea of rousing every Irishman by the demand for a peasant proprietorship. Parnell did not preach active violence against landlords, but those who did not carry out the orders of the Land League were to be "boycotted," a name obtained from Captain Boycott, who was the first to suffer from the treatment. Captain Boycott found that no one would work for him in any form whatever, either on the farm or in the house.



Charles Stewart Parnell,  
Leader of the Home  
Rule Party.

## The Nineteenth Century

Mr. Gladstone was in power in 1880, when boycotting and general agrarian disorder was rampant in Ireland. Though really desirous of bringing peace and happiness to Ireland, the Liberal Government was led into passing very severe acts of coercion to preserve life and property in Ireland. These measures were resisted furiously by Parnell and his followers ; but they themselves were sent to Kilmainham Prison, after the measure had been passed which allowed anyone of whom there was "reasonable suspicion" of raising an agitation to be arrested. At one time Mr. Forster, the Chief Secretary, was able to declare that every dangerous person in Ireland was under lock and key. But this method did not agree with Liberal principles, and Mr. Gladstone at last came to terms with Parnell, and the prisoners were released. Mr. Forster at once resigned, and Lord Frederick Cavendish was appointed in his place.

The very evening of Lord Frederick Cavendish's arrival he was walking in Phoenix Park with Mr. Burke, a permanent official, when they were suddenly attacked by some ruffians, who murdered them both and then escaped. It afterwards became evident that Mr. Burke was the object of the attack, as he was supposed to have just learned the secret plans of a band of miscreants. All the Nationalists denounced the cowardly assassination, but its effect in England produced the Crimes Act, which placed Ireland under a severe rule.

At the General Election of 1886, Mr. Gladstone, after a short period in opposition, returned to power, but with only a small majority, not with the large one for which he had hoped, so that he might attack the

## Ireland

Irish Question apart from the votes of the Nationalists. He was still determined, however, to do something for Ireland, and, in spite of the resignation of John Bright and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and the opposition of many of his old followers, on April 8, 1886, he brought in a bill to give Home Rule to Ireland. This bill practically restored the former Irish Parliament, allowing no Irish members at Westminster. Parnell and the Nationalists eagerly welcomed and supported the bill, which, however, was defeated on its second reading, owing to the split in the Liberal party.

Lord Salisbury then became Prime Minister, and during his term of office the notorious articles appeared in the *Times* under the heading "Parnellism and Crime." The facsimile of a letter, said to be written by Parnell, was printed, in which he declared that he had been forced, for diplomatic reasons, to express a public abhorrence of the Phoenix Park murders. A special commission of judges was appointed by Parliament to inquire into the methods used by the Nationalist party. The letters proved to be forgeries, the work of a man named Pigott, who fled to Madrid, where he committed suicide. Parnell and his colleagues came triumphantly through their ordeal, the Commission acquitting them of the most serious accusations. But shortly after this success Parnell fell from power, owing to his connection with a divorce case. Refusing to give up his leadership, even for a short time, Parnell caused a split in the Nationalist party, the majority choosing Mr. Justin McCarthy as their leader. Parnell over-exerted himself to regain his power, and died suddenly in 1891.

The second Home Rule Bill was submitted by

## The Nineteenth Century

Mr. Gladstone in 1893, on the fall of Lord Salisbury's government. It differed radically from the first bill, in that it left eighty Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, while giving a Parliament in Dublin to manage purely Irish affairs. The bill passed the House of Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords. Since then the policy of the Unionist Party has been "to kill Home Rule by kindness," granting many privileges to the Irish tenants, especially the bill of 1903, which created a fund with which to purchase estates from landlords who were willing to sell. The tenants, aided by Government loans, were in this way enabled to own their farms, and by this Act a very large proportion of Ireland is already possessed by those whose labour improves the value of the land.

It is quite true, as Lord Rosebery reminds us, that "the Irish question has never passed into history because it has never passed out of politics." This is particularly true of the present time, for just when this book is going to press, the third Home Rule Bill is waiting to become law under the Parliament Act.

In spite of the many attempts which have been made to deal justly and considerately with Ireland, the general feeling is summed up by Mr. Lecky, who wrote in 1892, that "after ninety years of direct British government, the condition of Ireland is universally recognized as the chief scandal and chief weakness of the Empire."

One of the most devoted believers of the benefits which will accrue to Ireland from a native parliament asks the question—"Is it not better to have, across

## Ireland

that strip of stormy water, a nation of free men who are friends, fellow-workers for the Empire's welfare, firm allies in danger, than to be the most unhappy masters of an island of unconquered and insurgent bondsmen?"

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